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"Take Calais, monseigneur," said Gabriel. Page 174.

The Two Dianas

Standard Edition

The Works of PG 2227
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Alexandre Dumas



The Two Dianas
The Page of the Duke of Savoy



Historical Romances

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THE TWO DIANAS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SON OF A COUNT, AND THE DAUGHTER OF A KING.

IT was on the 5th of May, 1551, that a young man about eighteen years of age, and a woman about forty, issuing out of a house of humble appearance, traversed together the little village of Montgomery, which lies near Auge. The young man was of that beautiful Norman race distinguished by their chestnut hair, blue eyes, white teeth, and rosy lips: he had that soft fresh complexion, which occasionally takes something of power from the beauty of the northern men, making it almost womanly; his figure, however, was both strong and flexible; he was elegantly dressed in a pourpoint of deep violet cloth, with embroideries of the same color; his boots of black leather, mounting above the knees, were such as were then worn by young pages; and a velvet cap, set a little on one side, and shaded by a white plume, covered a brow, indicating at once firmness and sweet temper. His horse, whose bridle was over his arm, followed him. The woman seemed to belong to the lower class of society, or at least to the grade between that and the bourgeoisie: her dress was simple, but extremely neat.

As they went through the village, every one, young and old, saluted the young man, who replied to them by a friendly nod. Each seemed to recognize a superior in him, who scarcely knew yet, himself, that he was so.

Leaving the village, they took a path, which, leading to the top of the mountain, scarcely left room for two people to walk abreast, and the young man asked his companion to go first, as it was dangerous for her to walk behind, on account of his horse: she obeyed, and he followed her, silent, and evidently preoccupied. They were approaching a fine old castle, which had taken four centuries and ten generations, to attain its present venerable appearance: like all castles of that period, that of Montgomery had little regularity, it had descended from father to son, and each proprietor had, according to his own caprice, added something to the giant of stone. The square tower had been built under the Dukes of Normandy, and then others, more florid in their construction, had been subsequently added. Towards the end of the reign of Louis XII., a long gallery, with painted windows, had completed the building: from this gallery, and from the top of the tower, the view extended for many leagues, over the rich plains of Normandy.

At last they arrived at the grand entrance. Strange to tell, for more than fifteen years this magnificent castle had been without a master: an old steward continued to collect the rents, servants, who had grown old in this solitude, remained in the castle, which they opened every day, as if each day the master was expected to return.

The steward received his two visitors, with friendship for the woman, and deference for the young man.

"Maître Elyot," said she, "let us come into the castle, I have something to say to M. Gabriel, and I wish to say it in the state room."

"Go in, Dame Aloyse," replied he, "and say where you wish, what you have to say to monsieur: you know, that unfortunately, no one will come to disturb you."

They crossed the hall, where formerly twelve armed men had constantly watched. Seven of these had died,

and had not been replaced. Five remained, doing the same duty as in the count's time. They entered the drawing-room—it was left just as the count had quitted it. Only into this apartment, where formerly all the nobility of Normandy was to be seen, no one had entered for fifteen years but the servants. It was not without emotion that Gabriel gazed on this room, but the impression which he received from the somber walls was not sufficiently powerful to distract his thoughts for a moment, for as soon as the door was closed, he said, "Now, my dear Aloyse, my good nurse, although you really seem more moved than myself, you have no longer a pretext to avoid the history which you have promised me. Speak at once, I pray; have you not hesitated enough, and have I not waited like an obedient son? When I asked you what name I had a right to bear, what was my family, and who was my father, you replied to me, 'Gabriel, I will tell you all, on the day that you attain your eighteenth year, the age of majority for those who have a right to wear a sword.' Now this 5th of May, is the day, and I came, my good Aloyse, to summon you to keep your promise; but you replied to me with a solemnity, which almost frightened me, 'It is not within the humble walls of a poor squire's widow, that I will disclose to you your birth: it is in the state room of the castle of Montgomery.' We have climbed the mountain, and are now in the chosen place—so speak."

"Sit down, Gabriel, for you permit me once more to give you this name."

The young man took her hands, with a movement full of affection. "Sit down," continued she, "not on this chair—not that."

"Where then, good nurse?"

"Under that dais," said Aloyse, in a solemn voice. The young man obeyed. "Now listen to me."

"But sit down first."

"You permit it?"

"Are you jesting?"

The good woman sat down on the steps of the dais, at the feet of the young man, and then began—

"Gabriel, you were hardly six years old, when you lost your father, and I, my husband. You were my nursling, for your mother died in giving you birth. From that day, I, the foster-sister of your mother, have loved you as my own child; the widow devoted her life to the orphan, and as she gave you her milk, she gave you her heart. You will render me this justice, will you not, Gabriel—that I have never ceased to watch over you?"

"Dear Aloyse," said the young man, "many real mothers would have done less than you have done, and none, I feel sure, could have done more."

"All, however," continued the nurse, "have been anxious to do their best for you. Dom Jamet de Croisin, the worthy chaplain of this castle, who died about three months ago, instructed you carefully, and no one, they say, can surpass you at reading, writing, or in the past history of France. Enquerrand Lorien, the intimate friend of my poor husband, and the old squire of the Counts of Vimoutiers, have instructed you with care in the science of arms, in the management of the lance and the sword, in horsemanship, and in all things pertaining to chivalry. At the fêtes and jousts, which were held at Alençon, on the occasion, both of the coronation and the marriage of our gracious king, Henry the Second, you proved, even two years ago, how well you had profited by these lessons. I could but love you, and teach you to serve God; that I have always tried to do. The Holy Virgin has aided me, and now at eighteen, you are a pious Christian, a learned gentleman, and an accomplished soldier. I trust, that with God's help, you will not be

unworthy of your ancestors, Monseigneur Gabriel, Seigneur de Lorge, Comte de Montgomery ! !”

Gabriel rose with a cry.—“Comte de Montgomery—I !” cried he. “Well I hoped it, I almost suspected it. Do you know, Aloyse, that in my childish dreams, I once said so to my little Diana. But what are you doing there, at my feet, Aloyse? Come into my arms, good nurse: can I no longer be your child, because I am the heir of the Montgomeries—a Montgomery !” repeated he proudly, while he embraced his good nurse. “I bear, then, one of the oldest and most glorious names in France :—Yes, Dom Jamet has taught me, man by man, the history of my noble ancestors. Of my ancestors ! Embrace me again, Aloyse ! What will Diana say to all this ? St. Godegrand, bishop of Suez, and St. Opportune, his sister, who lived under Charlemagne, were of our house—Roger de Montgomery commanded one of the armies of William the Conqueror—William de Montgomery went a crusade at his own expense. We have been allied more than once to the royal houses of Scotland and of France, and the first English and French noblemen will call me cousin,”—but suddenly stopping, he said in a lower tone, “Alas ! with all this, Aloyse, I am alone in the world—the great lord is a poor orphan, the descendant of so many royal ancestors has no father. My poor father ! and my mother—dead, both of them dead. Oh ! speak to me of them, that I may know what they were, now I know that I am their son. Begin with my father. How did he die ?”

Aloyse was silent. Gabriel looked at her with astonishment,—“I asked you, nurse,” repeated he, “how my father died.”

“Monsieur, God only knows. One day Comte Jacques de Montgomery left his house in the Rue des Jardins de St. Paul, at Paris ; he never returned to it. His friends

and his cousins sought him in vain. King Francis, himself, ordered a search to be made, but it was without success. His enemies, if he perished—the victim of some treason—were very skilful, or very powerful. You have no father, and yet the tomb of Jacques de Montgomery is not among those of his ancestors, for he has never been found, dead, or living.”

“Ah! it was not his son who sought for him,” cried Gabriel. “Oh! nurse, why have you kept silence so long? Did you hide my birth from me because I have my father to avenge, or to save?”

“No; but because I wished to have you, yourself, monsieur. Do you know what were the last words of my husband, of the brave Pierrot Travnigny, who was devoted to your house? ‘Wife,’ said he to me, some minutes before he drew his last breath, ‘as soon as you have closed my eyes, quit Paris immediately with the child. Go to Montgomery—not to the castle, but to the house that monseigneur was kind enough to give us, and there you must bring up our master’s heir, without mystery, but quietly. Our good country people will respect, and not betray him. Hide his origin from himself, above all; he would show himself, and be ruined: let him know only, that he is noble,—that will preserve his dignity; then when age shall have made him prudent and grave, as his blood will make him brave and loyal,—when he shall be eighteen, tell him his name and his race. He can then judge for himself, what he should do, but take care until then; formidable enemies and invincible hatreds will pursue him, and those who have succeeded in seizing the eagle, would not spare his offspring.”

“He died, monsieur, and I, faithful to his orders, took you, a poor orphan, not six years old, who had scarcely seen your father, and brought you here. The disappearance of the count was known, and it was suspected that

powerful enemies would threaten whoever bore his name. They saw and doubtless recognized you in the village; but, by a tacit agreement, no one asked about you, or wondered at my silence. Not long after, my only son, your foster-brother, died; God seemed to wish that I should be entirely devoted to you—all pretended to believe that it was my son who had survived; but still they treated you with a touching respect and obedience. You already resembled your father, both in face and in disposition; the instinct of the lion revealed itself in you—one could see that you were born chief and master. The children of the neighborhood had already begun to submit to your guidance—in all their plays you were at the head. The finest fruits, the tithe of the harvest, came unasked for to my house. Dom Jamet Enquerrand, and all the servants at the Castle, gave you their services as a natural duty, and you accepted them as your right.

“You showed your race in everything,” continued the nurse, “but these instincts and impulses only betrayed you to the faithful—you remained hidden and unknown to the malevolent, and you have arrived safely, at the age at which Pierrot authorized me to trust to your prudence. But you, ordinarily so grave and prudent, you see your first words were for vengeance and *éclat*.”

“Vengeance, yes; *éclat*, no. You think then, Aloyse, that my poor father’s enemies live still?”

“Monsieur, it is safest to presume so. If you went to court, quite unknown, except by your name, which would draw all regards upon you—brave, but inexperienced—strong in good intentions, and in the justness of your cause, but without friends, allies, or personal reputation; what would happen? Those who hate you, would know you, and you would not know them; they will strike you, and you will not know whence the blow comes. Not only your father will be unavenged, but you will be lost.”

“That is precisely, Aloyse, why I regret not having had time to make myself friends and renown. Ah! if I had known two years ago! But never mind, it is but a delay, and I will make up for lost time. I will go to Paris, Aloyse, and without concealing that I am a Montgomery; but I will not say that I am the son of Count Jacques. There are plenty of titles and branches in our family, and it is sufficiently numerous for me to pass unrecognized. I will take the name of Viscomte Exmès, Aloyse, and that will be neither concealing nor betraying my proper character. Thanks to Enquerrand, I know the family history well. To whom shall I address myself? to the Constable de Montmorency, that cruel repeater of paternosters? No! I believe you are right. To the Marshal de St. André? No, he is neither young nor enterprising enough. To François de Guise? Yes! he is the man. Montmédy, St. Dizier, Boulogne, have already proved what he can do. I will go to him, and win my spurs, under his orders. Under the shade of his name, I will fight for my own.”

“Monsieur will permit me to observe that the honest and good Elyot has had time to put large sums aside for the heir of his master: you can live like a prince, monsieur, and all the young men, your tenants, whom you have exercised so well in arms, will feel it both a duty and a pleasure to follow you to battle. It is your right to call them round you; you know that, monsieur.”

“I will use it, Aloyse.”

“Will monsieur receive, now, all his servants and dependants who burn with a desire to congratulate him?”

“Not yet, good Aloyse. I must take a ride before anything.”

“To Vimoutiers?” said Aloyse, smiling.

“Yes, perhaps. Do not I owe Enquerrand a visit and my thanks?”

“And with the compliments of Enquerrand, monsei-

gneur will be very happy to receive those of a pretty little girl called Diana."

"Why," replied Gabriel, laughing, "this pretty little girl is my wife, and I have been her husband for the last three years, that is to say since she was nine years old."

Aloyse looked thoughtful. "Monsieur," said she, "if I did not know that in spite of your youth, you are grave and thoughtful, I would not say what I am about to say, but what might be play to others is a serious thing to you; remember, monsieur, we do not know whose daughter Diana is. One day, the wife of Enquerrand, who had himself gone to Fontainebleau, with the Comte de Vimoutiers, his master, found, on entering her house, a child in a cradle, and a heavy purse of gold on the table. In the purse was a considerable sum of money, half of an engraved ring, and a paper containing the single word, 'Diana.' Bertha had no child, so she gladly accepted this charge; but she died soon, and on Enquerrand devolved the care of the little girl. He, and I, each with a similar charge, have exchanged cares; I have tried to make Diana good and pious; he has made you learned and adroit. Naturally you have known Diana, and naturally you have become attached to each other; but you are the Comte de Montgomery, declared so by authentic documents, and known to many, and no one has yet come to claim Diana. Take care, monsieur; I know she is only a child now; she will grow, however—and will be very beautiful, but her birth may never be known; and in that case you are too great to marry."

"But, nurse, I am about to leave her."

"True. Pardon the old Aloyse for her too great anxiety, and go to see, if you like, this charming child; but remember that you are impatiently waited for here."

"I will soon return. Embrace me again, dear Aloyse;

call me ever your child, and receive a thousand thanks, my good nurse."

"Be ever blessed, my child and master."

CHAPTER II.

A BRIDE WHO PLAYS WITH HER DOLL.

ALTHOUGH Gabriel desired to go quickly, he soon began to let his horse take its own pace. Numerous feelings, some sad and some joyful, filled his mind. When he thought only that he was Comte de Montgomery, his eyes sparkled, and he spurred on his horse; but soon the remembrance returned, "My father was killed, and has not been avenged;" and he allowed the bridle to fall from his hand. Then the thought that he was going to fight, to make a name for himself, raised his head proudly again; till again saddened by the thought that he must leave his little Diana, his old playmate. But he would return; he would have found the enemies of his father, and the parents of Diana.

When he arrived at the door, the joyful thoughts had decidedly gained the victory over the sad ones. Through the hedge which surrounded the garden, Gabriel could see among the trees the white dress of Diana. He cleared it with a bound, and was soon standing beside her, radiant and triumphant, but she was crying.

"What is it, dear little wife?" said Gabriel. "Whence comes this bitter grief? Has Enquerrand been scolding you for tearing your dress, or neglecting your lessons? or has your bullfinch been stolen? Tell your faithful knight, Diana; he is here to console you."

"Alas! Gabriel, you can no longer be my knight, and that is why I weep."

Gabriel thought that Enquerrand had been telling the little girl his rightful name and birth, and that it placed a barrier between them, so he said,—

“And what, Diana, be it good or bad fortune, do you think could ever make me renounce the title, which I am so proud to bear?”

But Diana did not appear to understand; and weeping more than ever, and hiding her face on Gabriel's breast, she sobbed out, “Gabriel! Gabriel! we must see each other no more.”

“And who will prevent us?” cried he.

She raised her charming blond head, her blue eyes full of tears, and with a profound sigh. “Duty,” she answered, with solemnity. Her pretty face had an expression, at once so unhappy and so comic, that Gabriel could not help laughing, but he drew her towards him and kissed her.

“Oh!” cried she, “mon Dieu! I am forbidden to allow that.”

“What in the world has Enquerrand been saying to her?” thought Gabriel; but he said, “Then you love me no longer, my darling?”

“I not love you!” cried she; “how can you think such a thing, Gabriel? You, who have always been so good to me—who carried me when I was tired—who helped me with my lessons. You, who screened my faults, and shared my punishments, when you could not prevent them. You, who have always been with me—who made me beautiful bouquets—who brought me birds'-nests. Oh, Gabriel! I shall never forget you; I never thought we should be separated; but that does not prevent it; and we are to meet no more.”

“But why?”

She hung her head, and said, in a low voice, “Because I am the wife of another.”

Gabriel laughed no more. His heart sank, and he said, in a troubled voice, "What do you mean, Diana?"

"I am now," replied she, "Madame la Duchesse de Castro, and my husband is called Horace Farnèse, Duc de Castro;" and the little girl smiled through her tears at the words, "Madame la Duchesse" and "husband." But her grief returned on seeing Gabriel's. He stood before her, pale and wild-looking.

"Is it a joke?" asked he.

"No, my poor Gabriel, it is a sad reality. Did you not meet Enquerrand? He went to Montgomery half an hour ago."

"I came over the hill," said Gabriel; "but finish."

"Oh, Gabriel! why did you stop away four days? It brought us misfortune. The day before yesterday I was uneasy. I had not seen you for two days, and I had made Enquerrand promise, that if you did not come the next day, he would take me to Montgomery. Well, the next morning I slept rather late, so I dressed in haste, and was about to go down, when I heard a great noise under my window. I looked out, and saw before the door, cavaliers magnificently dressed, followed by squires, and behind them a gilded carriage. As I was looking, and wondering what it meant, Antoine knocked at my door, and said that Enquerrand wished me to come down immediately. I felt very frightened, but descended. The room was full of these gay gentlemen when I entered, and I was more frightened than ever. One of the grandest came towards me immediately, and giving me his hand, led me up to another gentleman, and said, 'Monseigneur le Duc de Castro, I have the honor of presenting to you your wife. Mademoiselle,' added he, turning to me, 'this is Horace Farnèse, Duc de Castro, your husband.'

"The duke smiled; but I, frightened and in despair,

ran to Enquerrand, who was in one corner, and throwing myself into his arms, I cried, 'Enquerrand, this is not my husband; I will have no other husband than Gabriel; pray tell these gentlemen so!' The one who had presented me to the duke, frowned. 'What means this nonsense?' said he. 'Nothing, sir; only child's fancy,' replied Enquerrand, looking very pale. Then he whispered to me, 'Diana, you must obey your parents, who have sent to claim you.' 'Who are my parents?' asked I, aloud; 'it is to them that I wish to speak!' 'We come in their name, mademoiselle,' replied the gentleman; 'I am their representative. If you do not believe me, here is the order, signed by the king!' He presented to me a parchment, sealed with a red seal, and I saw at the top of the page, 'We, by the grace of God,' and at the bottom, 'Henri.'

"I was bewildered — thunderstruck—overwhelmed. Enquerrand abandoned me. The idea of my parents, the name of the king. You were not there, Gabriel; if you had been, I might have had courage to resist; but as it was, when the gentleman said, in an imperious voice, 'Come, there has been enough delay; Madame de Leviston, I confide to your care Madame de Castro. We wait for her to go to the chapel,'—I permitted myself to be led, quite stupefied."

"They took me to my room, and then, taking from a box a white silk dress, Madame de Leviston and her women put it on me; then a pearl necklace and earrings. I cried all the time, but they only laughed at me. When I was dressed, they told me that I looked charming, but I cried all the more. We went down; and the same gentleman taking my hand again, led me to a litter, all gold and satin, and placed me in it.

"The Duc de Castro rode by my side, and we went to the chapel at Vimoutiers. The priest was at the altar;

they said some words, which I did not understand, and put a ring on my finger. Then we came out again. They called me 'Madame la Duchesse,' and I was married, Gabriel."

Gabriel answered with a savage laugh.

"It was only when we came back," continued Diana, "that I recovered myself sufficiently to think of examining the husband that they had given to me. Ah, Gabriel, he is not so handsome as you; he is little, and in all his rich clothes he did not look so elegant as you; and then he looked haughty and impertinent. Add to this, that his hair and his beard were red, and you will see how I have been sacrificed. Soon he approached me, and taking my hand said, with a smile, 'Madame la Duchesse, pardon me that I am forced to leave you so soon; but you know, perhaps, that we are at war with Spain, and my presence is immediately required there. I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you before very long at the court, whither you are going; I beg you to accept some presents which I leave for you. Au revoir, madame. Keep yourself gay and charming as suits your age; play and amuse yourself while I fight.' So saying, he kissed me on the forehead, and his long beard hurt me. Then all the ladies and gentlemen bowed to me and went away, leaving me alone with Enquerrand.

"He had not understood much more of this adventure than I had. They had made him read the parchment containing the king's orders for my marriage. All that he knew more than I did was, that Madame de Leviston would soon come and fetch me and take me to court.

"When I went to my room I found in a great box—what do you think? a superb doll, with a complete trousseau of linen, and three dresses; white silk, red damask, and green brocade. Fancy, Gabriel, treating me like a child—it is shameful. However, the doll looks best in red,

it has such a beautiful complexion, the little shoes are charming, but——”

“Yes, you are a child,” interrupted Gabriel, sadly ; “but never mind, you cannot help being only twelve years old. I have been wrong, however, to waste a sentiment so ardent and profound as mine, for I feel by my grief how much I love you. But if you had been strong, if you had found in yourself sufficient energy to resist an unjust order, we might have been happy, as you have recovered your parents, and they appear to be of good birth.

“I, also, Diana, came to tell you a secret which has been revealed to me to-day, but now it is useless—it is too late ; your weakness has ruined all. All my life I feel that I shall remember you, Diana ; and our young loves will occupy a large share in my heart. But you, Diana, in the *éclat* of the court, will soon forget all that you care for now.”

“Never !” cried she, “and Gabriel, now that you are here, I feel brave. Shall I refuse to go when they come for me ? Shall I insist on remaining with you ?”

“Thanks, dear Diana ; but henceforth, before God and man, you belong to another : we must go each our own way, you to the court and gaiety, and I to camps and battles. God grant that we may meet again some day.”

“Oh, Gabriel ! I must see you again. I shall love you always,” cried the poor Diana, throwing herself weeping into his arms ; but at that moment Enquerrand appeared, followed by Madame de Leviston.

“Here she is, madame,” said he, pointing out Diana. “Ah, it is you, Gabriel, I was going to Montgomery to seek you, when I met Madame de Leviston, and was obliged to return.”

“Yes, madame,” said the lady to Diana, “the king is impatient to see you. We shall, if you please, set out in an hour ; your preparations will not take long, I presume ?”

Diana looked at Gabriel.

"Courage!" said he.

"I am glad to tell you," said Madame de Leviston, "that this good Enquerrand can join us to-morrow at Alençon, and accompany us to Paris if you desire it."

"Oh!" cried Diana, "I know no other father but him;" and she gave her hand to Enquerrand, who covered it with kisses, while she looked through her tears at Gabriel, who stood by looking sad, but firm.

"Come," said Madame de Leviston, "we must be at Caen before night."

Diana, then, suffocated with sobs, ran to her room, and in about an hour returned ready for her journey. She asked leave to go once more round the garden. Enquerrand and Gabriel followed her. She picked two roses, and putting one in her dress gave the other to Gabriel, and he felt, that at the same time, she slid a paper into his hand. Then she threw herself into his arms, and as he said, "Adieu," answered, "No, au revoir." When she was in the carriage, Gabriel heard her say, through her sobs, "Are you sure that they have put in my big doll?"

When they were gone, Gabriel opened his paper, and found in it a lock of hair. A month afterwards he arrived at Paris, and had himself announced at the Hôtel Guise as the Vicomte d'Exmès.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAMP.

"Yes, gentlemen," said the Duc de Guise, as he entered his tent, "to-day, the 24th of April, 1557, we lay siege to Civitella. On the 1st of May we shall be masters of it, and shall go to besiege Aquila. Then we shall soon be

at Capua, and afterwards, gentlemen, I hope to show you Naples, if it please God."

"And the pope, my dear brother;" interrupted the Duc d'Aumale, "his holiness, who had promised us the support of his troops, leaves us here reduced to our own resources; and it seems to me that our army is not strong enough to venture so far into the enemy's country."

"Paul the Second," said François, "has too much interest in our success to leave us without assistance. Biron, do you know if the partisans, whose rising in the Abruzzi the Carraffias promised us, are making a move?"

"No, monseigneur, they are quiet; I have certain and recent news."

"Our guns will awaken them," said the duke; "M. d'Elbœuf, have you heard anything of the provisions which we ought to have received at Ascoli?"

"No, monseigneur, and alas——"

"A delay, a simple delay," interrupted the duke; "and after all, we are not so very badly off. The taking of Campli has set us up a little, and I would wager that if I entered any of your tents in half an hour I should find a good supper served up, and perhaps at table with you some pretty widow or orphan from Campli whom you have undertaken to console."

The gentlemen laughed as they retired; but once alone, the duke buried his face in his hands, and remained in thought. Shortly after, hearing steps behind him, he turned round with an angry expression at the intruder, which, however, instantly vanished when he saw who it was, and holding out his hand he said, "Dear Gabriel, *you* will not hesitate to advance because bread is scarce, and the enemy numerous? You, who went the last out of Metz, and entered the first into Campli. But do you come to announce any news?"

"Yes, monseigneur, a courier from France bearing, I

think, letters from your illustrious brother, Monseigneur le Cardinal de Lorraine."

"Will you fetch them for me, yourself?"

Gabriel went out, and soon returned, bearing a packet, sealed with the arms of Lorraine. Six years had but little changed our friend Gabriel; he looked more manly, it is true, but he preserved unaltered the same pure and grave expression—the same frank and honest look—and, let us add, the same heart, full of youth and of illusions. Le Duc de Guise was thirty-seven, and although of a great and generous nature, he had in the battle of life lost many a youthful feeling and enthusiasm, but he still comprehended and loved the chivalric and devoted character of Gabriel. An irresistible sympathy drew him towards the young man.

He asked him to open and read him the letter, but Gabriel, after throwing a glance over it, returned it to him, saying, "Pardon, monseigneur, but this letter is written in some strange character which I cannot read."

"Oh, it is a confidential letter, then," said the duke, and taking from a box a paper containing the key to the cipher, and handing it to Gabriel, said, "Now, read."

Gabriel still hesitated, but the duke, pressing his hand warmly, said again, "Read, my friend."

Gabriel read, "'Monsieur, my very honored and illustrious brother (when shall I be able to call you in one word, sire?).'" Gabriel stopped again.

The duke smiled. "You are astonished, Gabriel, but I trust that you do not suspect me. Le Duc de Guise is no Constable de Bourbon. May God preserve to our king his crown and his life. But is there in the world no other crown except that of France? As chance has put you in our confidence, I will hide nothing from you; you shall enter into all my designs and my dreams. The duke rose and walked up and down the tent as he spoke.

"Our house, Gabriel," continued he, "may, I think, aspire to any greatness: our sister is Queen of Scotland—our niece, Marie Stuart, is about to wed the Dauphin. Our nephew, the Duke of Lorraine, is the chosen son-in-law of the king. Then we have claims upon Florence and Naples; let us content ourselves with Naples for the present. Would not this crown be better on the head of a Frenchman, than of a Spaniard? We are allied to the Duke of Ferrara, and united with the Carraffas; Paul the Fourth is old—my brother, the cardinal, will succeed him; the throne of Naples is tottering, and I mount it. The dream is splendid, but I begin to fear that it is only a dream. Gabriel, I had not 12,000 men with me, when I crossed the Alps, but the Duke of Ferrara had promised me 7000, which he now keeps at home. Paul the Fourth and the Carraffas had boasted that they could raise in Naples a powerful faction, and they engaged to furnish soldiers, money, and provisions—they have not sent a man, a wagon or a crown; but in spite of all, I will persevere. I will not quit this promised land till the last extremity, and if I am forced to retreat, I shall return."

"Monseigneur," said Gabriel, "how proud I am, to bear even so small a part in your glorious ambitions."

"And now," continued the duke, "having twice given you the key to my brother's letter, I think you can read and understand it. Go on then, I listen."

"Sire," that was where I stopped," said Gabriel. "I have to announce to you two pieces of bad news, and one good. The good news is, that the marriage of our niece, Marie Stuart, is decidedly fixed for the 20th of next month, and will be solemnized in Paris on that day. One of the others comes from England. Philip the Second of Spain is there, and is exciting his wife, Mary Tudor, who obeys him so lovingly, to declare war against France.

They speak already of an army on the frontiers of the Pays Bas, and of which the Duke Philibert Emanuel of Savoy will have the command. Then, my dear brother, in the scarcity of men here, the king will certainly recall you from Italy, and our plans there will be, at least, adjourned ; but remember, François, that it is better to defer them, than to lose them altogether ; so no rashness.”

“Yes,” interrupted the duke, striking the table violently with his fist, “my brother is but too much in the right ; Mary, the prude, will certainly obey her husband, and I certainly will not disobey the king, openly, when he recalls his soldiers : so there is a new obstacle to this cursed enterprise, for it is cursed, in spite of the benediction of the pope. Is it not, Gabriel ? Tell me truly, do you not think it desperate ?”

“I would not wish, monseigneur, to be among those whom you say discourage you, but if you appeal to my frankness——”

“I understand you, Gabriel, I am forced to agree with you. It is not on this occasion that we shall do great things together, but it is only delayed for a time, I swear. Continue, Gabriel, we have still more bad news to hear, if I remember rightly.”

Gabriel went on. “‘The other unlucky affair, of which I have to tell you, is of a more private, but not less disagreeable nature. Since your departure, M. de Montmorency is not less jealous and bitter against you than before, and never ceases to grumble at the goodness of the king to our house. The approaching marriage of our niece with the dauphin does not all please him, and doubtless it disturbs the equilibrium which the king has endeavored to preserve between the houses of Guise and Montmorency. The old constable loudly demands an equivalent, and has at last found one, which is the marriage of his son François with——’” Gabriel did not

finish, his voice failed him, and a deadly pallor covered his face.

“What is the matter, Gabriel?” cried the duke.

“Nothing; monseigneur—a sudden giddiness. I will proceed; where was I? ‘The marriage of his son, François, with Madame de Castro, daughter of the king and Diana de Poitiers. You remember that she, a widow at thirteen, her husband having been killed at the siege of Hesdin, has been for five years at the convent of the Filles Dieu, in Paris. The king, at the solicitation of the constable, has just recalled her to the court, and let me tell you, brother, that she is a pearl of beauty, and you know that I am a good judge. Her grace has won all hearts, and above all, her father’s; he had before given her the Duchy of Chatellerault, and now has added that of Angoulême. She has scarcely been here a fortnight, but her ascendancy over him is immense.

“‘Indeed, her mother, who, for some unknown reason, does not openly acknowledge her, seems almost jealous of the new power. It would be good for the constable, for you know, between ourselves, that Diana de Poitiers can refuse nothing to the old rascal. This cursed marriage is therefore but too likely to come off.’”

“You seem faint, again, Gabriel,” interrupted the duke, “go, and rest, while I finish this letter, which interests me deeply, for it would be a dangerous advantage for the constable. I thought that his booby of a son was affianced; let me read——”

“I am really quite well, and quite able to finish;” and he went on—“There is only one chance for us; François de Montmorency is secretly married to Mademoiselle de Fiennes, and a divorce will be necessary, which François is going to Rome to solicit from the pope. Let it be your business, therefore, my dear brother, to be beforehand with him, and endeavor, through your own influence,

and that of the Carraffas, to make his holiness reject this request, which will be, I warn you, supported by a letter from the king. Defend your position as well as you did St. Dizier and Metz; and I, on my side, will exert myself to the utmost, for, on my faith, it is necessary. I pray God, brother, to give you a long and happy life. Your brother, G. Cardinal de Lorraine. From Paris. 12th April, 1557.”

“Come, nothing is yet lost,” said the duke, when Gabriel had finished, “and the pope who refuses me soldiers, may at least make me a present of a bull.”

“Thus,” replied Gabriel, trembling, “you hope that his holiness will not grant this divorce from Jeanne de Fiennes?”

“Yes, I hope so. But how you are moved, my friend. Dear Gabriel, you enter into our interests with warmth. But now let us speak of yourself, and as, in this unlucky expedition, you will hardly have an opportunity of adding to the eminent services that I owe you, let me begin to pay my debt. What can I do for you? Can I not be useful to you, in any way? Come, speak frankly.”

“Oh! monseigneur is too good, and I do not see——”

“Five years,” interrupted the duke, “you have fought heroically for me, and have never accepted a farthing from me. You must want money—Diable! Every one always wants money. It would be neither a gift nor a loan, but a debt; so, no scruples, and although we are not too well off——”

“I know that, monseigneur, and I have so little need of money, that I wished to offer you some thousands of crowns, which might serve the army, and which really are very useless to me.”

“And which I will receive willingly, for they will come very à propos I must admit. But can I then do nothing for you, O man without desires? Do you want titles?”

"Thanks, no, monseigneur; what I covet is personal glory, and not vague honors. Thus, since you presume that there is little more to be done here, it would be a great gratification to me, to be sent to Paris, to carry to the king, for the marriage of your niece, the flags that you have taken in Lombardy and in the Abruzzi; and it would crown my wishes, if a letter from you to his majesty, deigned to attest that some of them were taken by me, and not altogether without danger."

"Well, that is easy, and yet more, it is just; I should regret this parting, but that it probably will not be for long, for if war breaks out in Flanders, as appears very probable, I presume I shall see you there?"

"I shall be only too happy to follow you there, monseigneur."

"Well, then, when will you set out?"

"The sooner the better, I think, monseigneur, if the marriage is to take place on the 20th of May."

"True. Then go to-morrow; and now retire to rest, and I will write the letter to the king, and also an answer to my brother, to tell him that I hope to succeed with the pope."

"And, perhaps, monseigneur, my presence in Paris may contribute to the success of your wishes; on the point you have at heart."

"Always mysterious, Vicomte Exmès, but I am accustomed to it from you. Adieu! I wish you a good-night."

"I will come to-morrow morning for my letters, monseigneur. I will leave my men with you, they may be useful; I only ask permission to take with me my squire, Martin Guerre; he is devoted to me, and is a brave soldier, who is afraid of nothing but his wife and his shadow."

"How so?" asked the duke, laughing.

"Monseigneur, he escaped from home to get away from

his wife, and entered my service at Metz : but the devil, or his wife, to punish him, took the form of another Martin Guerre, and he saw, fighting at his side, a striking likeness of himself. Dame ! that frightens him, but, away from it, he mocks at balls, and is a host in himself ; he has saved my life twice."

"Take, then, with you this valiant coward, and come to me early to-morrow, my friend, my letters will be ready."

Gabriel slept little ; and, after receiving the last instructions and adieus of the duke, set off, at six in the morning, on the 25th of April, accompanied by Martin Guerre, for Rome, and from thence to Paris.

CHAPTER IV.

DIANA DE POITIERS.

It is the 20th of May in Paris, at the Louvre, and in the apartment of Madame de Brèzè, Duchesse de Valentinois, commonly called Diana of Poitiers. Nine o'clock in the morning had just struck, and Diana, dressed entirely in white, in a coquettish negligé, reclined on a velvet sofa. The king, Henry the Second, magnificently dressed, sat by her side.

The room was resplendent with all the luxury with which that epoch of art, that we call Renaissance, could decorate a royal apartment. In the paintings which hung on the walls, Diana the huntress, goddess of the woods and forests, was the heroine ; and gilded and colored medallions and panels bore everywhere the arms of Henry the Second.

Let us now turn our eyes to the king. He was tall and active, and a man of great strength. He combated by regular diet and exercise, a tendency to embonpoint, and surpassed the swiftest in the chase, the strongest at the

tourney. He had a dark complexion, with black hair, and a full and black beard. This day, as usual, he wore the colors of Diana, green satin, slashed with white, and glittering with gold embroideries; a hat, with a white plume, sparkling with pearls and diamonds, a double gold chain, supporting a medallion of the Order of St. Michael, a sword engraved by Benvenuto, a white collar in Venice point-lace and a mantle of velvet, starred with gold. The costume was splendid, and the wearer elegant.

Diana was dressed in a simple white peignoir of a transparent material. To paint herself would be a difficult task—the lilies and roses of her complexion, or the graces of her form, which surpassed the most beautiful statue. Her age it was impossible to guess, but the youngest always looked faded beside her. She was worthy of the love of a king, and had been, for two-and-twenty years, the well and only beloved of Henry the Second.

“Now, sire,” cried she, starting up; “it is time for me to prepare for the wedding; you are already dressed, but I am not.”

“Yes,” replied he, “I have a rendezvous for ten o’clock.”

“A rendezvous, sire! With a woman?”

“Yes.”

“And pretty, doubtless?”

“Yes, Diana, very pretty.”

“Then it is not the queen.”

“Well, Catherine de Medicis has her own kind of cold beauty; however, it is not with her. Can you not guess with whom?”

“No really, sire.”

“It is another Diana, our daughter—our dear daughter!”

“You repeat that too loudly, and too often, sire,” replied Diana. “You forget that we agreed that Madame de Castro should pass for the daughter of another.”

"But you love her all the same, do you not, Diana?"

"I love her because you do."

"Oh, yes! very much. She is so charming and so good; besides, she recalls to me my youthful days when I loved you—not better than I do now, but madly, even to crime."

The king remained for a few minutes plunged in thought, and then said, "That Montgomery—you did not love him, did you, Diana?"

"What a question," replied she, with a smile of disdain. "After twenty years, again this jealousy."

"Yes, I shall be always jealous of you, Diana. But if you did not love him he loved you."

"What mattered that, sire, while my heart was all yours. Besides, he has been dead so long."

"Yes, dead," replied the king in a hollow voice.

"Do not let us sadden a fête day with these souvenirs. Have you seen François and Marie this morning? They are very happy and joyful, but scarcely more so than the Guises, whom this marriage delights."

"Yes, and it equally enrages the constable, my old Montmorency. He will be more enraged soon, however, for I fear that our Diana will not have his son."

"But, sire, you have promised for her."

"Yes, but it appears that Diana is averse to it."

"A child of eighteen! What reason can she have?"

"That is what she is about to confide to me."

"Go to her, then, sire, while I adorn myself to please you."

"After the ceremony, I shall see you again; but, before I go, tell me once more that you love me."

"Yes, sire, as I always have, and always shall love you!"

"Adieu! then, my loved and loving Diana."

Immediately on the departure of the king, a panel, which was concealed by the tapestry, opened on the op-

posite side of the room, and the Constable de Montmorency entered. "Mon Dieu!" said he, rudely, "you have talked enough to-day, I hope."

"My friend," replied Diana, "you saw that long ago, I tried to dismiss him."

"If you imagine that your discourse was edifying or amusing to me—but what is this new whim of refusing the hand of your daughter to my son, after it has been so solemnly promised? I tell you that this marriage must take place. Do you hear, Diana? You must arrange it. It is the only way to prevent those cursed Guises becoming too powerful: therefore in spite of the king, or the pope, I will have it."

"But, my friend."

"Ah!" cried the constable, "when I tell you that I will have it."

"Then it shall be so," replied Diana, frightened.

CHAPTER V.

DIANA DE CASTRO.

DIANA DE CASTRO, whom we saw, as a child, was now nearly eighteen; her beauty had kept all its promise, and her features were at once regular and charming. She was but thirteen when the Duc de Castro, whom she had never seen again, was killed at the siege of Hesdin. The king then sent her to the convent of the Filles Dieu, at Paris, and she soon became so attached to the nuns, that she had requested permission to remain there.

"Well," said Henri to her, on entering, "I am ready to listen to you, *ma mignonne*."

"Sire, you are so good."

"I love you, my child, and I wish to please you as far as I may, without risking those grave interests which a

king must consider, before all affection. And stay, to prove this to you, the good sister, Monigne, who took so much care of you at the convent, has just been, by your recommendation, appointed abbess of the Convent of Origny, at St Quintin."

"Oh! I thank you, sire."

"Here are, also, the letters-patent which confer on you the title of Duchesse d'Angoulême. But I see you sometimes sorrowful and thoughtful, and I wish to know how to cheer you; are you not happy, my child?"

"Ah! sire," replied Diana, "how could I not be so, surrounded by your affection and your benefits. I only ask that the present should continue."

"Diana, you know that I recalled you from the convent to marry you to François de Montmorency; it would be an alliance worthy of you, and would, moreover, have been useful to my interests, yet you seem averse to it. You owe me, at least, the reasons for this dislike, which grieves me, Diana."

"I will not hide them from you, my father. In the first place, they tell me that François de Montmorency is already privately married to one of the ladies of the court."

"It is true; but this marriage, contracted clandestinely, without my consent, or that of the constable, is worthless; and if the pope pronounce a divorce, you surely need not be more scrupulous than his holiness; so if that be the reason——"

"No, I have another,—my father."

"And what other objection do you find to an alliance, which would honor the richest and noblest heiress in France?"

"Well, my father, because I love some one," cried Diana, throwing herself, confused, and tearful, into his arms.

“You love! Diana; and whom?”

“Gabriel, sire.”

“Gabriel, what?” asked the king, laughing.

“I do not know.”

“How! Diana. Pray explain yourself.”

“Sire, I will tell you all. He was my childhood’s love—I saw him every day. He was so gentle, so brave, so handsome, so clever, and so tender. He used to call me his little wife. Ah! sire, do not laugh; it was a serious and holy affection, the first which was engraven on my heart: others have been added to it, but none can efface that. I permitted myself to be married to le Duc de Castro, but I knew not what I did—I only obeyed like a little girl. Since then, I have felt my treason towards Gabriel.

“Poor Gabriel,” continued Diana, “when he left me, he did not cry—but what profound grief in his look! All returned to my mind during the solitary years that I passed at the convent, so that I have lived twice over the years passed with Gabriel; and, returning here, sire, to your court, among the accomplished gentlemen who surround you I have not seen one who can rival Gabriel; and it is certainly not François, the submissive son of the haughty constable, who can make me forget the gentle, yet proud, companion of my infancy. Thus, now that I am of an age to understand, as long as you allow me, my father, I will remain faithful to Gabriel.”

“Have you then seen him again, since you left Vimoutiers, Diana?”

“Alas! no.”

“But you have heard of him?”

“No. I only heard from Enquerrand that he left the country soon after me, and told Aloyse, his nurse, not to be unquiet about him—that he would return to her famous.”

"And have not his family heard of him?"

"Sire, he had no family. I never saw any one with him but Aloyse, when I went to visit him at Montgomery."

"At Montgomery!" cried the king, turning pale. "I trust that he is not a Montgomery. Tell me that he is not."

"Oh! no, sire; if he had, he would have lived in the castle, and he lived in the cottage of Aloyse. "But what have these Counts of Montgomery done to you, to move you so, sire? Are they your enemies? They speak of them all through the country with veneration."

"Ah! truly," replied the king, with a disdainful laugh, "but they have done nothing to me. What could a Montgomery do to a Valois? But this Gabriel—had he then no other name?"

"None that I know of, sire; he was an orphan, and I never heard his father spoken of."

"And you have no other reason to object to this alliance than your old affection for this young man?"

"That is enough."

"Well, Diana; I would not attempt to combat it, if he were here, and I could know him; although I fear that his origin——"

"Have I not also a bar in my scutcheon?"

"But, at least, you have a scutcheon, and one that noble houses desire to mingle with their own. Your Gabriel, on the contrary—but that is not now the question. You have not seen him for six years, he has probably forgotten you—he loves some one else, perhaps."

"Sire, you do not know Gabriel; he had a faithful heart."

"Well, Diana, perhaps infidelity to you is scarcely likely; but you think he went to fight, probably he has fallen. I afflict you, my child, and your beautiful eyes fill

with tears. Well, I am not much accustomed to believe in great attachments, but I respect yours. Still, *ma mignonne*, for a childish love, whose object has disappeared—for a remembrance—a shadow, see into what embarrassment your refusal will throw me. The constable, if I withdraw my word, will grow angry, and perhaps leave me; and then, it is no longer I who reign, but the Guises. See Diana—the duke has under his hand the whole military force in France—the cardinal, all the finances; a third brother, all my ships at Marseilles; a fourth commands in Scotland; and a fifth is going to replace Brissac in Piedmont. I speak gently to you, Diana, and explain my circumstances; I beg, when I might command, but I love much better to let you judge for yourself; I prefer that you should yield to the father, and not to the king. You are good and affectionate, this marriage would save me, it gives to the Montmorencies the power, which it withdraws from the Guises, and equalizes the balance once more.

“Well, you do not reply; will you be deaf to the prayer of your father, who does not constrain you, but only asks you to render him the first service which you have ever had it in your power to grant, and which will, moreover, contribute to your own honor and happiness? Well, my daughter; will you consent?”

“Sire,” replied she, “you are a thousand times more powerful, when your voice implores, than when it commands. I am ready to sacrifice myself to your interests on one condition.”

“What is it, spoiled child?”

“This marriage shall not take place for three months, and meanwhile I will send to Aloyse, for news of Gabriel, so that if he be dead I shall learn it, and if he be alive, I can, at least, claim back my promise.”

“Granted, willingly!” exclaimed Henri, joyfully, “and

I will aid you in the search ; and in three months, you will marry François, whether your young lover be living or dead."

"And now," said Diana, sadly, "I do not know whether I ought to wish most for his death, or his life."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSTABLE DE MONTMORENCY.

ON the afternoon of the same day the Constable de Montmorency was at the Louvre, in the cabinet of Diana of Poitiers, examining one of his secret agents. The spy was of middle height, and dark in complexion, with black hair and eyes ; and he resembled, in a most striking manner, Martin Guerre, the faithful squire of Gabriel—they looked like twins.

"What have you done with the courier, Arnold ?" asked the constable.

"Monseigneur, it was necessary to put him out of the way, but it was in the night, in the forest of Fontainebleau ; they will lay the murder to robbers. I am prudent."

"Nevertheless, it is a serious thing, and I blame you for being so prompt with your knife."

"I am always ready to do anything in the service of monseigneur."

"Yes ; but once for all, Arnold, remember, that if you let yourself be taken, I shall let you be hung."

"Be easy, monseigneur ; I am a man of precautions."

"Now let me see the letter."

"Here it is, monseigneur."

"Open it, then, without breaking the seal. Diable ! do you suppose that I can read ?"

Arnold du Thill, taking from his pocket a sharp pair of scissors, cut carefully round the seal, and opened the

letter. He first pointed to the signature, "Monseigneur sees that I do not deceive him. The letter, addressed to the Cardinal de Guise, is from Cardinal Carraffa, as the miserable courier had the folly to tell me."

"Read it then, at once."

Arnold read,—“ ‘Monseigneur, and dear ally, only three important words. Firstly, according to your request, the pope will linger over the affair of the divorce, and will dally with François de Montmorency, who arrived here yesterday, only to refuse him at last.’ ”

"Paternoster!" murmured the constable; "may the devil take all these red robes."

"‘Secondly,’" continued Arnold, "‘M. de Guise, your illustrious brother, after having taken Campli, holds Civitella in check; but to decide us to send him the men and supplies he asks for, we must be assured that you will not recall him for the war in Flanders, as report goes, you will do. If we have a certainty that he is to remain, his holiness will aid him efficaciously. Thirdly, I announce to you, monseigneur, the approaching arrival in Paris of an envoy from your brother, the Vicomte Exmès, bringing to the king the colors taken in Italy. He will doubtless arrive nearly as soon as my letter; and his presence, and the glorious spoils which he will lay at the feet of the king, will assuredly be of service to your cause.’ ”

"Fiat voluntas tua," cried the constable, furiously.

"We will give a worthy reception to this cursed ambassador. Arnold, is that devil of a letter finished?"

"Yes, monseigneur, except the compliments and the signature."

"Well, you will have plenty to do."

"I ask no better, monseigneur, with a little money to help me."

"Drôle, here are a hundred ducats; with you, one must always have money ready."

"I spend so much in the service of monseigneur."

"Your vices cost more than my service."

"Oh, monseigneur deceives himself about me. My dream would be to live calm, happy, and rich, in some country place, surrounded by my wife and my children, like a good father of a family."

"Quite virtuous and pastoral. Well, amend your ways—lay aside some money—marry if you can—realize your plans of happiness—who prevents you? But meanwhile reclose the letter, and take it to the cardinal; you will disguise yourself—you understand—and say that you were charged by your dying companion——"

"Monseigneur may trust to me. All shall be more probable than truth itself."

"Who comes here?" cried the constable.

"Pardon me, monseigneur," said a servant, entering; "but here is a gentleman arrived from Italy, who asks to see the king, on the part of the Duc de Guise, and I thought I had better tell you; he is called the Vicomte Exmès."

"You have done well, Guillaume. Show him in here; and you, Arnold, place yourself behind that tapestry, and do not lose the occasion of seeing this man; it is principally for that that I receive him."

"I believe, monseigneur, that I have seen him already in my travels, but it is good to make sure."

The spy glided behind the tapestry, and Gabriel was introduced. "To whom," said he, bowing, "have I the honor of speaking?"

"I am the Constable de Montmorency. Monsieur, what do you desire?"

"I beg your pardon; it is to the king that I wish to speak."

"His majesty is not in the Louvre, and in his absence——"

"I will go to his majesty, or wait for him," interrupted Gabriel.

"His majesty is at the fêtes of Tournelles, and will not return before the evening. Are you ignorant that to-day they celebrate the marriage of the dauphin?"

"No, monseigneur; I heard it as I came along. Can I see the Cardinal de Lorraine? It was for him I asked, and I know not why they brought me to you."

"M. de Lorraine," said the constable, "being a man of peace, loves the mockery of war. I, who am a man of war, love only real combats; that is why I am at the Louvre, while he is at the Tournelles."

"I will go to him there."

"You come from Italy?"

"Yes, monseigneur."

"From the Duc de Guise, perhaps? What is he doing?"

"Permit me, monseigneur, to lay my account before his majesty in the first instance, and to leave you for that purpose."

"Paternoster!" cried the constable; "he shall pay for these insolent airs. Hola, Arnold! Well, where is the fellow? Gone also—save and confound him."

While the constable vented his ill-humor in oaths and paternosters, according to custom, Gabriel, in traversing a gallery to quit the Louvre, found, to his astonishment, standing near the door, his squire Martin Guerre, whom he had ordered to wait in the court. "Oh! it is you, Martin!" said he. "Well, go with the flags carefully rolled up, and wait for me at the corner of the Rue St. Catherine. The cardinal may wish me to present them to the king at the fêtes."

"Yes, monsieur;" and he ran quickly down-stairs. Thus Gabriel, on coming into the court, was much surprised to find him still standing there, looking white and scared.

"Well, Martin, what is the matter?"

"Ah, monsieur, I have just seen him; he passed close by me just now, and spoke to me."

"Who?"

"Who! Satan, I think. The phantom—the other Martin Guerre."

"Again this folly, Martin! you are dreaming."

"No, no! he spoke to me, I tell you. He stopped before me, and petrified me with his glance, saying, with his infernal laugh, 'Well, we are still in the service of Vicomte Exmès,' (remark the 'we,' monsieur), 'and we are bringing back the flags won by M. de Guise.' How could he know that, monsieur? Then he heard the sound of your steps, and saying, 'We shall meet again, Martin Guerre,' he disappeared through the door, or rather through the wall."

"You are mad! he could hardly have had time to speak, since you left me in the gallery."

"I! monsieur. I have not stirred from the place where you left me."

"To whom, then, did I speak just now?"

"Assuredly to the other—to my double—my specter."

"My poor Martin, you are ill; we have marched too long in the sun."

"Yes, you think that I am delirious, I know, but I do not know a word of the orders that you say you gave to me."

"You have forgotten them, Martin; well, I will repeat them. I told you to go with the flags, and wait for me at the corner of the Rue St. Catherine. Do you remember now?"

"Pardon, monsieur; I cannot remember what I never knew."

"Well, you know it now—go quickly."

CHAPTER VII.

THE TILT-YARD.

THE tilt-yard had been prepared across the Rue St. Antoine, and formed a square, surrounded on each side by scaffolds covered with spectators, while at one end sat the king and queen. At the opposite end was the entrance for the combatants. About three o'clock in the afternoon, when the religious ceremony, and the repast which followed it, were over, the king and queen took their places amidst vivats and exclamations of joy from all sides.

Then the king ordered that the tilting at the ring should commence. This game was, in those days, complicated and difficult; the post on which the ring was hung, was placed about two thirds from the entrance of the course, which it was necessary to traverse at full gallop, and in passing to bear away the ring on the point of the lance. The lance was not to touch the body, but to be held horizontally, with the elbow above the head. The prize was a diamond ring, given by the queen.

Henri, on his white horse, caparisoned with velvet and gold, was one of the most elegant and skilful cavaliers that it was possible to imagine. He held and managed his lance with admirable grace and certainty. However, M. de Vieilleville rivaled him, and even seemed about to obtain the prize; he had two rings more than the king, and there remained but three to be taken. But M. de Vieilleville, a perfect courtier, missed them all, and the king had the prize. On receiving it, he cast a glance towards Diana of Poitiers, but it was the queen's gift, and he felt bound to offer it to the newly-made bride.

Other games succeeded, and the king won a magnificent bracelet: he went and seated himself near Diana, and publicly placed it on her arm. The queen grew pale with rage; but according to her usual custom, pretended to see nothing, and began to talk to her ladies. Several gentlemen then asked to be permitted to break a lance in honor of the ladies, which was readily granted.

Henri taking a gold chain from his neck, offered it for a prize, adding, "Do your best, gentlemen, for I shall endeavor to regain it; at six o'clock the combats will finish, and the victor, whoever he be, will be crowned."

Several gentlemen held the ground alternately, but at last the Marshal d'Amville took his place, and kept it against five successive lances. The king could refrain no longer, "Oh," said he, "M. d'Amville, I will see if you are fixed there forever." He armed, and at the first course, M. d'Amville was unhorsed. After him came M. Aussun, but when he, in his turn, was beaten, no other presented himself.

"How is this, gentlemen," cried the king; "will no one tilt against me? No one fears, I trust; there is no king here, but the victor: no privileges, but those of skill; therefore come forward boldly, gentlemen."

Still no one came. All feared equally to be victor or vanquished, and the king was growing angry and impatient, when at last a new assailant passed the barrier. Henri, without looking to see who it was, advanced; the two lances broke, but the king tottered on his saddle—by which he was obliged to support himself, while the other remained motionless. At this moment, six o'clock struck, and the king was vanquished. He descended joyfully from his saddle, and taking the victor by the hand, led him himself up to the queen. To his surprise, he saw a face which was perfectly unknown to him. He was a handsome young man—and the queen smiled as she put the

chain round his neck. He, after bowing, rose, and going straight up to Madame de Castro, offered her the chain, while "Gabriel!" and "Diana!" burst from their lips, but so low, that no one heard them, and it passed for a courtesy to the beautiful daughter of the king.

The king also took it as such, and thanked him for it, adding, "I, sir, who am well acquainted with my nobility, do not remember having seen you before, but I wish much to know the name of a cavalier who gave me just now so rude a shock."

"Sire, it is the first time that I have had the honor of being in your majesty's presence. I have been, until now, with the army, and have just arrived from Italy; I am the Vicomte Exmès." Then making a sign to two men, who stood near, they advanced, and laid the flags at the feet of the king. "Sire," continued Gabriel, "here are the flags won in Italy by your army, and sent to you by Monseigneur le Duc de Guise. His eminence the Cardinal de Lorraine assures me that your majesty will excuse their presentation, at what is, perhaps, an inopportune time. I have also the honor, sire, to place in your hands these letters from the duke."

The king took the letters, and reading them, said, "Thanks, M. d'Exmès, these letters recommend you to us—and what do I see? that you took four of these flags with your own hand, and our cousin of Guise calls you one of his bravest captains. What can I do for you, M. d'Exmès?"

"Sire, you overwhelm me; I trust myself to your majesty's goodness."

"You are a captain; would it please you to enter our guards? I was embarrassed for a successor to M. d'Avallon, and I see that you would be a worthy one."

"Your majesty——"

"You accept; that is settled. We are now going to re-

turn to the Louvre, when you can give me more details of the war."

Gabriel bowed. The king gave the order for departure, and the crowd dispersed, with cries of "Vive le Roi."

Diana drew near Gabriel for an instant and said in a low voice, "To-morrow, at the queen's circle." Then she vanished, leaving to her old friend a heart full of sweet hope.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRISON.

THE queen's circle usually assembled in the evening: Gabriel was informed that his new appointment as captain of the guard, not only authorized, but required him to attend them. His only regret then, was, that he had twenty-four hours to wait for it. His first occupation was to go with Martin Guerre to seek for a lodging. He took one, rather splendid for a young captain, but consistent with his means, and went to bed, happy and content. He had done much alone, and with no support but his sword, and no recommendation but his courage: he had attained an eminent rank, and no little glory, and could now go boldly forward in pursuit of her whom he loved, and of those whom he ought to hate.

The one, he had found; the other, Aloyse should help him to trace—he would send for her.

Gabriel's duty on the following day was to visit the prisons in Paris, a duty which would fall to him once a month. He began with the Bastille, and finished with the Châtelet. The governor gave him the list of the prisoners, pointing out any who were dead, released, or transferred, and he had to visit all who remained.

He thought he had finished his task, when the governor turned to another page, on which was written—"No.

21. Secret prisoner. If during the visit of the governor, or the captain of the guard, he attempts to speak, transfer him into a lower and worse dungeon."

"Who is this important prisoner?" asked Gabriel of M. de Salvoison, the governor of the Châtelet.

"No one knows," replied he; "I received him from my predecessor, as he from his. You see that the date of his entrance is left blank; it must have been in the reign of Francis the First. They tell me that he has twice tried to speak; but at the first word, the governor is bound under the most terrible penalties to shut the door of his prison, and then to have him moved into a worse dungeon.

"This has been done, and there now only remains one lower, which would be certain death. Doubtless they wished to bring him to that, but he keeps silence; he is always chained, and to prevent any possibility of an escape, a jailer enters his cell every five minutes."

"But if he spoke to this jailer?"

"Oh, he is deaf and dumb; he was born in the Châtelet, and has never been out of it."

Gabriel shuddered. This man, so completely separated from life, yet who still lived and thought, inspired him with profound pity—almost with horror. "What idea or what remorse; what fear of hell, or faith in heaven," thought he, "could prevent this miserable being from dashing his head against the walls of his cell? Was it vengeance, or hope, which chained him to life?"

His heart beat fast as he descended to the cell; they traversed several black and damp staircases—several horrible vaults, and then stopping before an iron door, the governor said, "It is here," and opened it with his key. Then Gabriel saw a frightful picture, such as one might see in a fearful nightmare. Everywhere stone, black, mossy, and damp; for this wretched place was lower than the bed of the Seine, and in the high tides, the water

half filled it. Horrible reptiles crawled over the walls, and there was no sound save the regular dropping of water from the roof.

Here lived two human beings, one guarding the other; both mute and seeming scarce alive. The jailer three parts an idiot, but a giant in strength, stood against the wall, looking with a vacant eye at the prisoner, who was lying in a corner on his bed of straw; his hands and feet secured by a chain, which was fastened to the wall. He was an old man, with white hair and beard.

When they entered, he seemed to sleep, and did not move: you might have taken him for a corpse, or a statue. But all at once he sat upright, opened his eyes, and looked at Gabriel. He was forbidden to speak, but his terrible look spoke for him. The governor visited every corner of the cell, while Gabriel remained stationary, looking as fascinated by those flaming eyes, while the sincerest pity filled his breast. The prisoner appeared also to contemplate his visitor with anything but indifference. Indeed, once he opened his mouth, as if about to speak, but the governor, turning round, recalled to him his threatened fate, and with a bitter smile he reclosed his eyes, and fell back into his stony immobility.

“Oh! let us go!” cried Gabriel, “this is dreadful.”

They regained the open air, but Gabriel could not banish from his mind the somber image until, the appointed time arriving, it was chased away by that of the blooming young girl.

CHAPTER IX.

DURING THE COMEDY.

THREE times at least during the week, the king and all the lords and ladies of the court met in the evening in the apartment of the queen. There they planned or

talked over the events of the day in all liberty, sometimes with all license ; and amidst the general conversation many a private one found a place. "And finding there," says Brantôme, "a troop of human goddesses, each lord and gentleman conversed with her whom he loved best." Often, again, there was dancing or acting.

It was at one of these réunions that Gabriel presented himself, with his joy not unmingled with anxiety. Full of happiness at meeting Diana again, and at the tender glances which she cast on him, he had at first forgotten the cardinal's letter, but it now returned to his memory, filling him with distracting doubts. Would Diana consent to this marriage ? Could she love this François de Montmorency ?

Martin Guerre, who accompanied him, informed him, that general report said that she did not love him. This faithful squire to do honor to his master at court, had ordered for himself a complete suit of brown cloth with yellow trimmings, which he paid for, and put on immediately. Therefore, the tailor was much astonished to see him return half an hour after in different clothes. This he explained by saying, that as the evening was cold, he had judged it expedient to put on something warmer, but that he was so much pleased with his new suit, that he wished for another precisely similar.

The tailor in vain represented to him that he would appear to be always wearing the same ; he persisted in his idea and compelled the tailor to promise that he would not make the slightest difference in the suits, only for the second order he asked for a little credit.

Gabriel perceived Diana the instant he entered the room ; she was seated near the queen dauphin, as Marie Stuart was generally called. To accost her at once might have appeared presumptuous in a new-comer, and would

doubtless have been rather imprudent, so he resigned himself to wait for a favorable opportunity. Soon after, the king announced that as a surprise to the ladies, a stage had been prepared, and that the evening was to be finished by a five-act play. This news was received with acclamation, and the gentlemen led the ladies to their places. Gabriel was too late to take Diana, so he stood a little way behind her. The queen soon noticed and sent for him.

"M. d' Exmès," said she, "why were you not at the tourney to-day?"

"Madame, the duties which his majesty has confided to me prevented my having the honor."

"So much the worse," replied Catherine, with a charming smile, "for you are certainly one of our best cavaliers. You made the king reel yesterday, which is what few can do, and I should like to see new proofs of your prowess." Gabriel bowed.

"Do you know the piece they are playing?" continued the queen.

"Only in the Latin, madam; for I hear that it is an adaptation of a piece of Terence."

"Oh, I see that you are as learned as you are valiant. Now go and seat yourself behind me, among my ladies."

Gabriel gladly obeyed, and as Diana was at the end of the line next to the passage, he seated himself beside her. The piece was a comedy, and was received with much laughter and noisy enthusiasm, so that the lovers found an opportunity to converse unheard.

"Gabriel" and "Diana" were the first words that passed. "Are you then to marry François de Montmorency?" asked Gabriel.

"You seem high in the good graces of the queen," was Diana's reply.

"She called me."

"It is the king who desires this marriage."

"But you consent, Diana?"

"But you listen to the queen, Gabriel."

"Oh!" cried Gabriel, "do you really interest yourself in what another might make me feel? Diana, I am horribly jealous of you, for I love you madly."

"M. d'Exmès," cried the poor girl, trying to be severe, "I am called Madame de Castro."

"But you are a widow? You are free."

"Free! alas!"

"Oh, Diana, you sigh. Confess that the childish feeling which sweetened our first years has left some trace in your heart. Do not fear to be heard, they are all laughing around us. Diana, smile on me, and tell me that you love me, as I love you."

"But you must tell me how that is," said the little hypocrite.

"Listen to me, Diana; for the six years that I was away from you, I have thought of you constantly. On arriving at Paris, a month after you, I learned that you were the daughter of the king and of Madame de Valentinois; but it was not this that made me fear to approach you; it was your title of Madame de Castro. Still I thought, 'acquire renown—approach yourself near to her station—some day she will hear you praised, and will admire you.' I went to the Duc de Guise, who seemed the most likely to lead me to the glory that I coveted. I was with him at Metz, and while there, I heard of the capture of Hesdin by the imperial troops, and the death of your husband, who had not even seen you again since your marriage.

"How I fought, you must ask M. de Guise. I was at Abbeville, at Dinant, at Cateau-Cambresis—I was everywhere where there was danger. I heard you had retired to a convent, and I accompanied the duke to

Italy. At Civitella, by a letter from his eminence of Lorraine to his brother, I learned your intended marriage. Then I asked permission to return to France, to bring to the king the captured banners ; but my motive was to see you, Diana—to ascertain if your heart was in this new marriage, and to ask you, as I have done—do you love me ? ”

“ Gabriel,” said Diana, softly, “ I will reply to you. When I arrived a child of twelve years old, at this court, after a short period of astonishment and curiosity, I was nearly killed with ennui—the gilded chains of this existence weighed upon me, and I bitterly regretted the loss of the woods and fields of Vimoutiers and Montgomery. Each night I cried myself to sleep. Nevertheless the king, my father, was very kind to me, and I tried to reply to his affection by my love. But where was my liberty ? Where was Aloyse ? Where were you, Gabriel ? I did not see the king every day, and Madame de Valentinois was cold and constrained with me, and seemed almost to avoid me, and I required love, Gabriel ; therefore I suffered much that first year.”

“ Poor dear Diana,” said Gabriel.

“ Thus,” continued Diana, “ while you fought, I languished. It is the general fate ; the man acts and the woman waits, and it is much harder to wait than to act. At the end of that time the death of the Duc de Castro left me a widow, and the king sent me to pass my time of mourning in the Convent des Filles Dieu. The pious and calm existence of the cloister suited me much better than the perpetual intrigues and turmoil of the court, therefore I asked and obtained permission to remain there. In the convent, at all events, they loved me, and the good sister Monique reminded me of Aloyse. Then I was free to dream—of whom, and what—you guess, do you not ? ”

Gabriel replied with a passionate glance. Happily the play was an interesting one.

"Five years of peace and hope passed," continued Diana. "I had but one misfortune,—that of losing Enquerrand. At length, however, the king recalled me, and informed me that I was destined to become the wife of François de Montmorency. I have resisted, Gabriel; I was no longer the child who knew not what she was doing. But then my father begged me, and showed me how much this marriage was for the good of the kingdom. You had forgotten me—it was the king that said so, Gabriel. And then, where were you? In short, he begged so much, that yesterday—only yesterday, I promised all he wished, only stipulating for three months' delay, and that I should find out what had become of you."

"You have promised?" cried Gabriel, turning pale.

"Yes, but then I had not seen you, and I did not know that on that very day you would unexpectedly appear to renew in me all my old feelings—you, handsome, prouder than ever, yet still the same. Ah! I felt at once that my promise to the king was worthless, and this marriage impossible—that my life belonged to you, and that if you loved me still I loved you forever."

"Ah! you are an angel, Diana."

"But, Gabriel, since fate has brought us together again, let us consider the obstacles that we have to contend against. The king is ambitious for his daughter, and the Castros and Montmorencies will make him difficult to satisfy, alas!"

"Be easy on that point, Diana. The house to which I belong is as noble as theirs, and it will not be the first time that it has been allied to the royal family of France."

"Oh, Gabriel, I am so glad to hear that; I am very ignorant and do not know the name of Exmès. So long as you are not a Montgomery——"

"And why not a Montgomery?" cried Gabriel.

"Oh, the Montgomeries have done some wrong to the king, it appears, for he hates them."

"Really," said Gabriel, with a sinking heart, "but is it the Montgomeries who have injured the king, or the king who has injured them?"

"My father is too good to have been unjust."

"Good to you, Diana, but to his enemies?"

"Terrible, perhaps. But never mind, what are the Montgomeries to us?"

"If I were one, Diana?"

"Oh! do not say so."

"But if I were?"

"If it were so—if I found myself thus placed between my father and you I would throw myself at the feet of the injured party, whoever he might be, and I would weep, and beg that my father should pardon you, or you my father, for my sake."

"And your voice is so powerful, Diana, that all would yield to it, unless, indeed, blood has been shed, for then only blood can wash away blood."

"Oh! you frighten me. But you are only trying me, are you not?"

"Yes, Diana, that is all."

"And there is no hatred between my father and you?"

"I trust not, Diana; I should suffer too much if I made you suffer."

"Then, Gabriel, I hope to obtain my father's promise that he will abandon this marriage, which would kill me. A powerful king, as he is, must surely be able to satisfy these Montmorencies."

"No, Diana, all his treasures and all the honors he could bestow cannot compensate for you."

"So you think, Gabriel; but, happily, François de Montmorency does not think so, and he would prefer a

marshal's baton to your poor Diana. But, *mon Dieu!* the piece seems to be finished."

"Impossible! already. But you are right, here comes the epilogue."

"Happily, we have said what we wished to say."

"I have not said the thousandth part!"

"Nor I either. But, Gabriel, do not go and talk again to the queen."

"No, not if you do not wish it. But, alas! here is an end to the epilogue. Adieu, for a time, Diana; give me a last word to cheer me."

"Au revoir, my little husband," replied she with a charming smile.

Gabriel disappeared quickly, so as to keep his promise of not speaking to the queen, and when he got home he wrote the following letter:—

"MY GOOD ALOYSE,

"Diana loves me; but this is not what I ought to tell you first. Come to me, Aloyse: after six years of absence I desire to embrace you again. I am now captain of the King's Guards, one of the most coveted military appointments; and the name which I have made for myself will aid to re-establish the glory of the one which I received from my ancestors. I want you here to partake of my joy, for Diana loves me—my Diana—my old playmate, who has not forgotten her good Aloyse, although she calls the king, 'father.' Yes, the daughter of the king and Madame de Valentinois, the widow of the Duc de Castro, loves still with all her heart her old friends. She has just told me so, and her sweet voice still vibrates in my ear."

CHAPTER X.

PEACE OR WAR.

ON the 7th of June the king held a council, and the Vicomte d'Exmès, as captain of the guard, stood near the door with a drawn sword in his hand. All the interest of the council consisted as usual in the working of the ambitions of the houses of Guise and Montmorency, which were represented, on this occasion, by the Cardinal de Lorraine and the constable himself.

"Sire," said the cardinal, "the danger is pressing, the enemy is at our doors; a formidable army is organizing in Flanders, and at any moment Philip the Second may invade our territory, and his wife, Mary of England, declare war against us. Sire, you want a young, active, and enterprising general, who shall act boldly, and whose name alone shall be a terror to the Spaniards."

"Like your brother, of course," sneered the constable.

"Yes, like my brother," replied the cardinal, boldly, "like the conqueror at Metz and at Valenza. Yes, sire, you must recall the Duc de Guise, who, from want of means in Italy, has been forced to raise the siege of Civitella, and who will be invaluable to you here."

"Sire," said the constable, "recall the army if you please, since this invasion of Italy has ended, as I predicted, in ridicule. But you do not want a general; all is still peaceful, and you can keep it so; it is not a general that you require, but a minister, who is not blinded by his passion for war, but who will consider the true interests of France."

"Like yourself, of course," cried the cardinal.

"Yes, like myself," replied Clune de Montmorency, proudly, "and I counsel the king not to think of a war

which depends entirely on his own pleasure (for Philip the Second trembles before France, and his wife is silent), but to think of the peaceful interests of the kingdom, to which those who contribute are worth one hundred times more than any general."

"And deserve one hundred times more of the king, I suppose?"

"His eminence perfectly expresses my thoughts, and I am going even now to ask his majesty for a proof that my peaceful services have pleased him!"

"What is it?" asked the king, with a sigh.

"Sire, I beg your majesty to declare publicly the honor that you intend to do my house, in granting to my son the hand of Madame d'Angoulême."

Gabriel grew pale, and shuddered, but recovered himself a little on hearing the cardinal reply—"The bull of the pope, dissolving the marriage of François de Montmorency with Mademoiselle de Fiennes, has not yet arrived, and may not arrive at all."

"We will do without it, then," said the constable; "an edict can dissolve a clandestine marriage, and I beg his majesty to grant me one, to prove to myself, and to those who attack me, his approbation of my views."

"Doubtless I can make such an edict," said the king, whose weakness of character was not proof against such firm language.

The constable looked triumphant; but at this moment a trumpet was heard, playing a foreign air. All looked at each other with astonishment. Then an usher entered, and announced that Sir Edward Fleming, a herald from England, solicited the honor of being admitted into the presence of his majesty.

"Let him enter," said the king, surprised, but calm; while the dauphin and the princes drew nearer to the throne.

The herald entered, and bowing to the king, commenced, "Mary, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, to Henry, King of France. For having given encouragement to the English Protestants, enemies of our religion and of our State, and for having received them in France, and preserved them from the just pursuit instituted against them, We, Mary of England, France, and Ireland, denounce war by land and by sea against Henry of France, in token of which, I, Edward Fleming, herald, throw down my glove."

At a gesture from the king, the Vicomte d'Exmès picked up the glove; then Henry said, simply and coldly, to the herald, "I thank you, you may retire."

The herald bowed, and obeyed. The sound of the English trumpets was heard once more, then all was quiet.

At last the king broke the silence, by saying, "My cousin of Montmorency, it seems to me that you were rather hasty in promising us peace, and the good intentions of Queen Mary. This protection of the Protestants is a mere pretext; however, a King of France does not fear war, and if Flanders lets us alone for a little time—— Well! what is it now, Florimel?"

"Sire," said the usher, "a courier from the Governor of Picardy has arrived with special despatches."

"Go and see what they are, M. le Cardinal, I beg of you," said Henry.

The cardinal soon returned with the despatches, which he laid before the king. "Ah, gentlemen!" cried he, after glancing over them; "here is more news. The armies of Philip the Second are uniting at Givet, and M. Gaspard de Coligny sends us word that the Duke of Savoy is at their head—a worthy enemy. Your nephew, M. de Montmorency, thinks that the Spanish troops are about to attack Mézières and Rocroy; he demands instant

reinforcements to enable him to garrison these places, and make head against our enemies. You were not happy in your predictions to-day. Mary of England was quiet, you said, Philip afraid of us, and the frontiers quiet. M. de Lorraine, write to your brother to return at once; as to family affairs, we must adjourn them and we can well wait for the dispensation from the pope, to celebrate the marriage of Madame d'Angoulême. The sitting is over for the present, gentlemen, but we will meet again to-night. Adieu! until then, and may God protect France."

CHAPTER XI.

A DOUBLE ROGUE.

THE constable returned home in a very bad humor; he was met there by his squire, Arnold du Thill, who had come to speak to him.

"I am not in the humor to speak to you just now, Arnold," said the constable.

"Oh! I know, monsieur, you are annoyed at the turn that matters have taken about the marriage, but you know the king's humor may change to-morrow. There is, however, a far more formidable obstacle in Madame d'Angoulême herself."

"Ah! what do you know about her?"

"How does monseigneur think that I have spent my time this last fortnight?"

"Well, it is true that I have heard nothing of you lately; you of whom there was some complaint every evening."

"Yes, but it is now Martin Guerre to whom this is transferred. It is he who was picked up drunk by the watch; and it is he who was accused of attempting to carry off the wife of M. Gorju, the tailor."

"Yes," said the constable, laughing; "and his master defends him and says that he has been always the quietest and best-behaved of squires."

"He believes himself possessed of the devil."

"But what of Madame d'Angoulême?"

"Why, monseigneur, I have but to put on a certain brown and yellow suit, and the Vicomte d'Exinès speaks to me in the most confidential manner; and what do you think the vicomte is?"

"Parbleu! a frantic partisan of the Guises?"

"More than that; the favored lover of Madame d'Angoulême."

"What the devil do you mean? What do you know about it?"

"I am the confidant, I tell you. It is I, who half the times carry the letters to the lady. I am on the best terms with her maid, who is, however, much astonished at finding her lover so uncertain—one day bold, and the next quiet and reserved. The Vicomte and Madame d'Angoulême see each other three times a week in the queen's circle, and write to each other every day. Really, if I did not interest myself too much for myself, I should be quite interested for them, their loves are so pure and romantic; but your grace supplies me so well with pistoles that my services are all for you."

"Well, leave me now. You shall be well paid for all you do."

CHAPTER XII.

THE HEIGHT OF HAPPINESS.

"MARTIN," said Gabriel, the same day to his squire, "take this letter, and bring back an answer as soon as possible."

"Yes, monsieur, but I have a favor to beg; pray send some one to take care of me."

"Why, what new folly is this? Of what are you afraid?"

"Of myself, monsieur," cried Martin, piteously. "It seems that I have all at once become a drunkard and a gambler, and now, monsieur, they declare that last night I attempted to carry off the wife of M. Gorju, the tailor."

"Come, Martin, you are dreaming—but, stay, did you do this?"

"Dreaming, monsieur! here is the report, and, in reading it, I am overwhelmed with shame. I used to think that the devil amused himself by taking my form in which to play these nocturnal pranks, but you say that that is impossible; so I begin to think that I am sometimes possessed of an evil spirit."

"No, my poor Martin," said Gabriel, laughing; "only you give way to drinking sometimes, and then it seems you see double."

"But, monsieur, I only drink water."

"And yet, Martin, you were found drunk."

"Monsieur, that night I went to bed early, after saying my prayers, and I awoke in it the next morning, and it was only later that I learned what I had been doing all night."

"Well, Martin, I cannot give you any companion, for you alone know our secret."

"Then, monsieur, I will do my best, but I cannot answer for myself."

"Oh! nonsense; go, and remember that on this note depends my happiness or despair."

Martin replied with a sigh, and went out. Two hours after, he returned with the answer. Gabriel took it, and read. "Let us thank God, Gabriel, the king has yielded, and we shall be happy. You already know of the arrival

of the herald from England, who came to declare war in the name of Queen Mary, and the news of the great movement which is preparing in Flanders. These events, menacing perhaps for France, are favorable for our love, since they augment the power of the Duc de Guise, and diminish that of Montmorency. Still, however, the king hesitated ; but I prayed, Gabriel—I said that I had found you again—that you were noble and valiant, and I named you. The king, without promising anything, said he would reflect, and that after all, the interests of the State becoming less pressing, it would be cruel for him to sacrifice my happiness ; that he could give to François de Montmorency a compensation with which he ought to be satisfied. He has promised nothing, but he will do all. Oh ! you will love him, Gabriel, as I do ; this good father will realize all our dreams. I have so much to say to you, and written words are so cold ! come to me this evening at six o'clock ; during the council, Jacinthe will bring you to me, and we shall have a whole hour to talk over our happy future. However, I foresee that this campaign will call you away, and alas ! you must go to serve my father and deserve me, Gabriel—I who love you so much—for I do love you. Why should I try to hide it ? Come, then, and let me see if you are as happy as your Diana.”

“ Oh, yes, very happy,” cried Gabriel ; “ what can now be wanting to my happiness ? ”

“ Doubtless, not the presence of your old nurse,” said Aloyse, who had entered while he was reading.

“ Aloyse ! ” cried Gabriel, running towards her, and embracing her—“ oh, yes, good nurse, I wanted you. How are you ? You are not changed ; neither am I—in heart at least—but why have you been so long in coming ? ”

“ The late rains, monsieur, have flooded the roads, but your letters made me brave all obstacles——”

“Oh, you are right, Aloyse, because I want some one to rejoice with me. Do you see this letter? it is from Diana—from your other child—and she announces to me that all the obstacles to our marriage are removed, and that she loves me. Am I not at the summit of happiness?”

“And yet, monsieur, if it were necessary to renounce Diana?” said Aloyse, in a grave, sad tone.

“Impossible, Aloyse! besides, I tell you that all difficulties have been overcome.”

“One may conquer the difficulties which proceed from man, but not those from God,” replied the nurse. “You know that I love you, and would give my life to spare you pain. Well, if I said to you, without asking the reason, Monsieur, renounce Diana—cease to see her—stifle your love by every means in your power—a terrible secret, into which I implore you not to inquire, lies between you; if I said this to you, supplicating you on my knees, what would you say?”

“Aloyse, if it were my life you asked for you should have it, but my love is beyond my power; but you terrify me, nurse. Do not keep me in this horrible suspense, but whatever you have, and ought to say to me, say at once, I entreat.”

“You wish it, monsieur? Must I reveal to you the secret which I had sworn to keep from you? Yet God, himself, seems now to order me to disclose it. But, monsieur, are you not deceived in the nature of your affection for Diana?”

“No, Aloyse, certainly not; and her beauty——”

“Oh, it must be so; for, according to all probability, Diana is your sister.”

“Diana, my sister!” cried Gabriel, springing up. “How can the daughter of the king and of Madame de Valentinois be my sister?”

"Monsieur, Diana was born in May, 1539. Your father disappeared in the January of the same year; and do you know of what he was suspected, and of what they accused him? Of being the favored lover of Diana of Poitiers, and the rival of the Dauphin, now King of France. Now compare the dates, monsieur."

"Heavens and earth!" cried Gabriel. "But let me see," said he, trying to collect his thoughts. "My father was accused—who knows that it was true? Diana was born five months after the death of my father, but what proves that she is not the daughter of the king? He loves her as his child."

"The king may be deceived, or I may be wrong. I do not say that Diana is your sister; I only say that it is probable. My terrible duty was to tell you this, Gabriel. Say, was it not? You would not have renounced her unless I had done so; but now your conscience must judge your love."

"Oh, but this doubt is a thousand times worse than misfortune itself. Mon Dieu! who will teach me the truth?"

"The secret was only known to two people in the world—your father, and Madame de Valentinois, and she will never confess that she has deceived the king, and that Diana is not his child."

"And at least, then, if I do not love my sister, I love the daughter of my father's murderer; for it was the dauphin, was it not, Aloyse?"

"No one knows that but God!"

"Everywhere confusion, doubt, and terror," cried Gabriel. "Oh, I shall go mad!—but stay, I will go to Madame de Valentinois. I will swear to her that her secret shall be safe. I will go to Diana, and interrogate the feelings of my heart."

"Poor child!" said Aloyse.

"And I will not lose a minute," continued he, rising.
"Perhaps, before I return; I may have lifted the veil."

"Can I do nothing for you?"

"Pray for me, Aloyse."

CHAPTER XIII.

DIANA OF POITIERS.

THE constable was still with Diana of Poitiers, and was speaking to her in a tone as rude and imperious, as hers to him was gentle and mild.

"Eh, mordieu! she is your daughter," cried he, "and you have the same right over her as the king. Exact this marriage."

"But, my friend, you know that we have always been cold to each other, and see each other but seldom. She has gained, besides, so strong an influence over the king, that I scarcely know now whether she or I be the most powerful. Leave alone this marriage, which presents so many difficulties, and replace it by one still more brilliant. We will obtain from the king the hand of the little Princess Marguerite for your son."

"My son sleeps in a bed, and not in a cradle," replied he; "and a little girl, who can hardly speak, cannot aid the fortunes of my house. It is just because your daughter has so much influence with the king, that I desire the match, and I will have it in spite of every one."

"Well, I will do my best for you, if you will but be more gentle with me."

At that moment some one knocked at the door, and announced that the Vicomte d'Exmès begged for an audience of the duchess.

"The lover!" cried the constable. "Does he come to ask for the hand of your daughter, I wonder?"

"Shall I admit him?" asked the duchess, docilely.

"Certainly, in a few minutes; but first listen to me. If he comes to you, it is probably because he is in some difficulty, therefore refuse him everything he asks. If he wishes you to say yes, say no. Be disdainful and implacable. Do you understand, and will you do it?" Then the constable went out, and Gabriel entered.

"Madam," said he, "in seeking this interview, I may have taken a liberty; but there are circumstances so grave and serious, as to place one above all ordinary rules of etiquette, and I am, madam, in one of those grave situations. The man who comes to you, places his life in your hands, and implores your pity."

Madame de Valentinois gave no sign of encouragement. She sat leaning her head on her hand, and looking at Gabriel with a sort of ennuyéed astonishment.

"Madam," continued he, trying to shake off the influence of this affected silence, "you know, or do not know, perhaps, that I love Madame de Castro. I love her, madam, with a profound, ardent, and irresistible love."

Diana gave a nonchalant smile.

"I speak of this love which fills my soul," continued Gabriel, "to show that I understand every effect of love and passion. Love to me is sacred, as it is all powerful. Were the husband of Madame de Castro still alive, I should love her equally; I should not even try to overcome it—it is only a fictitious love that can be conquered. Thus, madam, you yourself, chosen and loved by the greatest king in the world, may not on that account have been sheltered from the influence of sincere passion, and may not have been able to resist it. A king is enamoured, and no wonder, of your admirable beauty; you are touched by this love, but your heart cannot always re-

spond to it. A gentleman, handsome, brave, and devoted, sees you, loves you, and this more obscure, but not less real passion, enters your heart, when the king's fails to do so. It is not a title that gains a heart. What could prevent you from having one day in your generous good faith, preferred the subject to the monarch? It is not I, at least, who could make it a crime in Diana of Poitiers, that being loved by Henry the Second, she loved the Comte de Montgomery."

Diana started up, and looked surprised; so few people knew that secret. "Have you proofs of that love?" asked she, uneasily.

"Only a moral certainty, madam."

"Ah!" said she, recovering her insolent assurance, "well, I do not mind confessing that I did love the Comte de Montgomery. What then?"

"And I doubt not that you still love his memory; for if he has disappeared from this world, it was for you. It is then in his name I come to you, and ask you a question, which will appear very bold, no doubt; but your answer, if you will be good enough to give it, will fill me with gratitude, for on this answer depends my life. If you do not refuse me, I shall be devoted to you, body and soul; and a devoted heart and arm are useful, even to the highest, madam."

"Finish, monsieur, and let us come to this terrible question."

Gabriel knelt before her, and went on, "Madam, it was in the year 1538, that you loved Jacques de Montgomery, was it not?"

"It is possible."

"It was in January, 1539, that he disappeared, and in May, 1539, that Madame de Castro was born."

"Well, what then?"

"Well, madam, this is the secret, which I come to im-

plore of you on my knees—the secret on which my fate depends, and which I swear shall die in my bosom if you confide it to me. Madam, was the Comte de Montgomery the father of Madame de Castro?”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Diana, disdainfully, “the question is bold, indeed, and you were right to preface it with so many preambles; however, you interest me, as an enigma, for what can it matter to you, whether she be the daughter of the king, or of the count? The king passes for her father, that should content you if you are ambitious.”

“I have a very strong reason, madam, but I beg you not to ask for it.”

“Oh, you want my secrets, and keep your own. A good bargain, truly.”

Gabriel took the ivory crucifix that hung over the prie Dieu behind him: “On your eternal salvation, madam, swear not to reveal the secret which I am about to confide to you, and not to use it against me.”

“Such an oath!” cried Diana.

“Yes, madam, for if you swear that, I know you will keep it.”

“And if I refuse to swear?”

“I must be silent, madam, and you will have refused me my life.”

“Do you know, monsieur, that you pique my woman’s curiosity strongly. If I swear, it is from pure curiosity, I warn you.”

“I also, madam, wish to know; only I wait for my answer as a man waits for his sentence of death. Will you swear, madam?”

“Say the words, and I will repeat them;” and after him she repeated, “On my eternal salvation I swear never to reveal to any one the secret you are about to confide to me, and to act as though I were ignorant of it.”

"Madam," said Gabriel, "I thank you for this first condescension. You will understand all when I tell you that I am the son of Jacques de Montgomery."

"His son?"

"Yes, so that if she be his daughter, she whom I love with a mad passion is my sister."

"Ah," thought Diana, "this saves the constable."

"Now, madam, will you do me the favor of swearing on this crucifix, that Madame de Castro is the daughter of the king? You do not reply, madam."

"Because I cannot pronounce this oath, monsieur."

"Ah, mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" cried Gabriel, "then she is my sister."

"No, monsieur, I will never confess that she is the daughter of any one but the king."

"Oh, truly, madam, how good you are. But pardon me, your interest in me may induce you to speak thus. Swear, madam, and your child will bless you."

"I will not swear, monsieur; why should I?"

"But, madam, you swore just now to satisfy simple curiosity; and when it concerns a man's whole destiny—indeed two destinies—you hesitate."

"Well, monsieur, I will not swear," said Diana, coldly and resolutely.

"And if, nevertheless, I marry Madame de Castro, and she be my sister, will not the crime be upon your head?"

"No, as I have not sworn."

"Horrible!" cried Gabriel; "but think, then, madam, that I can proclaim everywhere that you loved the Comte de Montgomery, and that you had deceived the king."

"You have no proofs," replied she, with her cruel smile. "I should deny it, monsieur, and who would believe you? But, pardon me," continued she, rising, "I am obliged to leave you, monsieur; you have really interested me

much, and your history is a singular one." So saying she rang the bell.

"It is infamous!" cried Gabriel. "Oh! why are you a woman? But take care, nevertheless, madam, you will not play with my heart and life with impunity: God will punish you and avenge me."

"You think so," replied she, with her mocking laugh. At this moment the page whom she had summoned lifted the tapestry. She bowed ironically to Gabriel and left the room.

Gabriel retired, mad with rage and grief.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOVER OR BROTHER.

WHEN Jacinthe introduced Gabriel into the room which Madame de Castro occupied at the Louvre she ran joyfully to meet him. "Here you are at last," she cried; "I have waited for you so impatiently, for I want you to share my happiness. I have been talking and laughing all alone, but now we can be happy together—but what is the matter, Gabriel? You look cold and grave, and almost sad; is it thus—that you show your love to me, and your gratitude to my father?"

"To your father—yes; let us speak of your father, Diana. As to this gravity that so astonishes you, it is my habit so to receive the good gifts of fortune, for I always fear them. I have been so little accustomed to them, and they often precede misfortune."

"I did not know that you were either so unlucky or so philosophical, Gabriel," replied the young girl, half amused and half piqued. "But as you say, let us speak of the king; has he not been good and kind?"

"Yes, Diana; he loves you well—does he not?"

"With an infinite goodness and tenderness."

"Doubtless," murmured Gabriel to himself, "he believes her to be his daughter." Then aloud he said, "There is one thing that astonishes me, and that is, why he left you for twelve years without knowing or seeing you. Have you ever spoken to him of it, Diana?"

"Oh, yes; but it was not his doing."

"Whose then?"

"Why, Madame de Valentinois, my mother."

"And why did she do that, Diana? Did not your birth give her a greater right to the love of the king? What had she to fear? Her husband was dead, and her father also."

"Indeed, Gabriel, I cannot explain the pride which keeps her from recognizing me as her child. She did her best to keep the king from acknowledging me, and refused to the last to be named in the act of legitimation. She seems to have a kind of aversion to me."

"An aversion which may be remorse," thought Gabriel, "if she knows that she has betrayed the king."

"But what are you thinking of, Gabriel, and why do you ask me these questions?"

"For no reason—a doubt of my unquiet spirit. But you love the king—you find in him a real father?"

"Oh! certainly. I felt drawn towards him at once. I love him—not as the king—not as my benefactor, but as my father."

"These instincts cannot deceive," thought Gabriel, joyfully, and he said, "It makes me very happy, Diana, to see you love your father so much."

"But now, Gabriel, let us speak of ourselves if you please."

"Yes, yes," cried Gabriel, "let us think of this attachment, which binds us for life to each other—let us look

into each other's hearts. Tell me, Diana, what do you feel for me? Do you not love me less than your father?"

"Jealous!" cried she. "You know that I love you differently, and it is easy to explain it. When the king is here I am happy but calm, and my heart beats no quicker than usual; but when I see you a singular agitation seizes me. I say to my father, before every one, all the caressing things I can think of; but to you, Gabriel, I feel as though I should not have the courage to do so even when I am your wife. In a word, when my father is near all my pleasure is peaceful, and while you are present it is troubled—almost painful."

"Oh! hush!" cried Gabriel, "you love me, and that frightens me, and at the same time reassures me. God would not have permitted this love if it were not right."

"What do you mean, Gabriel? Why does the avowal, which I have now the right to make, trouble you? What danger can there be?"

"None, dear Diana, none. Do not mind what I say, it is joy that makes me act thus strangely. Too much happiness bewilders me. But you did not always love me as you do now: when we used to walk together in the woods at Vimoutiers, you only felt the affection of a sister for me."

"I was a child then, Gabriel. I had not then dreamed of you during six years of solitude, and I had not lived for two months in the shadow of a court, where the corruption of language and manners has made me cherish still more our holy and pure passion."

"Is it true, Diana?"

"But you, Gabriel, in your turn open your heart, as I have mine. If my words have pleased you, let me also hear how you love me."

"I cannot tell you that," cried Gabriel. "Do not ask me to interrogate myself, it is too frightful!"

"Oh, Gabriel," cried Diana in terror, "it is your words that are frightful. What! can you not even tell me that you love me?"

"If I love you, Diana! You ask me if I love you? Yes; I love you like a madman—like a criminal, perhaps."

"Like a criminal! What crime can there be in our love? Are we not both free? Does not my father consent? What can be the matter with you, Gabriel; are you ill? Whence come these fears to you, who are generally so firm and strong? I am never afraid when near you. I trust you as I would my father. See, I do not fear you," and she approached nearer to him and laid her hand on his shoulder.

Gabriel repulsed her with terror. "No, no! go," he cried; "leave me."

"Oh, mon Dieu!" cried she, drawing back, "he repulses me—he does not love me."

"I love you too much."

"If you loved me, would my caresses horrify you?"

"Do they horrify me? Is it indeed my instinct that makes me repulse you?" cried he. "Oh, come here, Diana, that I may learn what I really feel. Come, and let me embrace you once again." He drew her towards him, and pressed a long kiss on her forehead. "Oh," he cried, "it is not the voice of blood which speaks in me—but that of love alone—I feel it. What happiness!"

"What do you mean, Gabriel? But you say that you love me, and that is all I care to know."

"Oh! yes, I love you. I adore you, passionately, madly, and to feel your heart beat thus against mine, is heaven—or hell," he cried, suddenly disengaging himself. "Oh! leave me, for I am cursed!"

Then he rushed from the room, leaving Diana mute with terror and despair. He descended the stairs mechanically, but all he had gone through had been too much

for him, and in the gallery of the Louvre he lost consciousness, and sank fainting on the floor. When he returned to life, he felt a hand on his forehead, and, opening his eyes, he saw the dauphiness—Marie Stuart—bending over him.

"It is you, M. d'Exmès," said she; "how you frightened me—I thought you were dead. How pale you are—what is the matter? Shall I call for assistance?"

"No, madam," replied he, trying to rise, "your voice has recalled me to life."

"Let me assist you," she said, "you had fainted. Are you really better?"

"Yes, madam, and I owe you a thousand thanks for your kindness. Oh, I remember, now—I remember all. Oh, mon Dieu!"

"Is it some great grief which has overwhelmed you?" said Marie Stuart. "Oh, yes! it must be so, for you grow paler than ever. I will call some one to take you home."

"I thank you, madam," said Gabriel, trying to rally himself, "but I feel strong enough now. While I live, I will remember your kindness; you seem like a consoling angel to me."

"Oh! what I did was very natural. I would have done as much for every one whom I saw suffering, and surely I should do it for you, whom I know to be a devoted friend of my uncle Guise. I deserve no thanks."

"That little was much to me in my state. Adieu, madam."

"Adieu, then, M. d'Exmès, and take care of yourself." Then she held out her hand to Gabriel, which he kissed respectfully.

"When he arrived at his rooms, he found Aloyse waiting anxiously for him.

Well?" said she.

Gabriel tried to overcome a second feeling of faintness,

which came over him, and replied in a hollow voice, "I know nothing. Both that woman and my own heart were silent. I know nothing, but that I burn and yet shiver."

"Courage, monsieur."

"Courage? Thank God, I think I am dying," and he again fell into a state of unconsciousness from which he did not so soon recover.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ILLNESS.

"THE patient will live, Dame Aloyse, but the illness has been serious, and his recovery will be slow. So much bleeding has weakened him greatly, but he will live, you may be assured. I thank God that the weakness of the body has diminished the strength of the shock that his heart has received. That is a wound that we cannot cure, and his might have been mortal."

The person who spoke these words was a tall man with piercing eyes, who appeared about fifty years of age. He was called Nostradamus.

"But, mon Dieu!" said Aloyse, "it is now the 2d of July, and he has lain here since the 7th of June, and during all this time he has never said a word, and never once recognized me. He seems like one already dead; if you touch him, he does not seem to know it."

"So much the better, I repeat. I do not wish him to return till the latest possible moment to the remembrance of his troubles. If he remains in this state for another month, as I hope he will, he is quite cured. Indeed he is so now, if there be no relapse, and so you may tell that pretty waiting-maid, who comes here twice a-day to ask after him. For in all this, there is a passion for some

great lady, is there not? It is to be hoped that he will recover the health of both body and mind at once. I can answer for the one, but not for the other. Still the constant visits of the servant would seem to pronounce it not a desperate case."

"Oh! yes it is," cried Aloyse.

"Come, come, Dame Aloyse! those who are rich, brave, young, and handsome like the Vicomte d'Exmès, are not long repulsed by the ladies of a court like ours."

"But suppose that it is not so, and that when my master recovers his reason, the first thought that occurred to him was that the lady whom he loves is irrevocably lost to him; what will happen?"

"It would indeed be very serious—so powerful a grief in so weak a brain."

"Ah! mon Dieu! my child will die!"

"There would be a great chance of a return of the inflammation of the brain. But surely you can hold out some hope? The most distant chance might save him."

"Then he shall be saved!" cried Aloyse. "I would perjure myself to save him."

A week passed and Gabriel seemed to notice the people around him, and then to aid them in what they did for him. At the end of another week he could speak, although incoherently, yet his words often seemed to refer to his past life. Then he recognized Aloyse and Martin Guerre; he asked for what he wanted, and spoke gently and reasonably.

One morning he said suddenly, "Aloyse, what of the war?"

"What war, monsieur?"

"The war with England and Spain."

"Monsieur, the accounts are bad. They say that the Spaniards, with 12,000 English, have entered Picardy."

"So much the better," said Gabriel.

Aloyse attributed this answer to the remains of delirium. But the next day he said, "I did not ask you yesterday whether the Duc de Guise had returned."

"He is en route, monsieur."

"What day of the month is it?"

"The 4th of August."

"Then on the 7th I shall have been confined to this room for two months."

"Oh!" cried Aloyse trembling, "then monsieur remembers."

"Everything, Aloyse; but it appears that I am forgotten, since no one comes to ask after me."

"Monsieur is mistaken," said Aloyse, watching anxiously the effect of her words; "a servant called Jacinthe came twice a-day to ask after you; but for the last fortnight, since you have been better, she has not come."

"She comes no more. Do you know why?"

"Yes, monsieur. Her mistress has obtained permission from the king to retire into a convent until the end of the war."

"Really," said Gabriel, with a sweet and melancholy smile, while a tear, the first he had shed, rolled over his cheek,—“ dear Diana."

"Oh!" cried Aloyse, "monsieur has pronounced her name calmly and without injuring himself. He is saved—he will live."

"I am saved, Aloyse, but I shall not live."

"How so, monsieur?" said Aloyse, trembling.

"The body has bravely resisted, Aloyse, but the soul is mortally wounded, and cannot recover. Happily France is at war—my place is there—I shall go, as soon as I am able, and will take care never to return."

"You will get yourself killed, monsieur! and why?"

"Why? because Madame de Valentinois will not speak—because Diana is perhaps my sister, and I love her—

because the king has perhaps murdered my father, although I do not know that for certain, and therefore as I can neither marry her whom I love, or avenge my father, there is nothing left here for me to do."

"No, monsieur, you are wrong. You have a terrible duty still to perform; but I will only speak to you of this on the day when M. Nostradamus shall assure me that you are strong enough to bear it."

This day arrived on the following week. Gabriel was well enough to go about as usual. "Do you persist in your determination, monsieur?" said Aloyse.

"Certainly."

"But if I give you a hope of discovering this secret?"

"You told me it was known but to two people, Madame de Valentinois, and my father who is dead."

"But if he were not dead?"

"My father lives! Do you know it, Aloyse?"

"No, but I suppose it."

"But how to find him? Speak, what clue is there, Aloyse?"

"It is a frightful history, monsieur. I had sworn to my husband never to reveal it, for it will throw you into the same dangers, and draw upon you the same powerful enemies. But any danger is better than certain death, and I know the strength of your resolutions, so I will tell you all."

"Yes, Aloyse, speak quickly!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE COQUETTE.

WE will complete from the chronicles of the time the mournful history of the Comte de Montgomery, which Aloyse was only able to give in part to his son.

Jacques de Montgomery was, like all his race, brave and hardy, and fought valiantly under Francis the First, who raised him to the highest rank in the army, and the first place at court. In 1530 he married Claudine de la Boissière, a simple marriage of convenience, but she died three years afterwards, leaving Gabriel an infant. Soon after Jacques fell deeply in love with Diana de Poitiers. For three months he hovered near her, without daring to address her ; but his looks were more than sufficient for her to understand his feelings, and she determined to make use of this passion when the occasion should arise. This was not long. Francis the First began to neglect the beautiful Diana, and to turn to Madame d'Etampes.

When the neglect became flagrant, Diana spoke for the first time in her life to the Comte de Montgomery—it was at a fête given by the king to his new favorite.

“M. de Montgomery,” said Diana, calling him.

He approached with some confusion.

“How sad you are !” continued she.

“Miserably so, madam.”

“And why ?”

“I wish to die, madam.”

“Whence comes this terrible melancholy, monsieur ?”

“I do not know.”

“I know, M. de Montgomery—you love me.”

Jacques turned pale, and trembled ; then arming himself with resolution, said almost rudely, “Yes, madam, I love you ; so much the worse for me.”

“So much the better,” returned she, laughing.

“What do you say, madam ! Take care, my passion is no child’s play, but is sincere, and deep, although hopeless.”

“And why hopeless ?”

“Because, madam—pardon my frankness—the king loves you.”

"It is true," replied she, with a sigh.

"You see, then, madam, that I must conquer my unworthy passion."

"Unworthy of you?"

"Oh, no, madam, and if one day——"

"Enough, monsieur," said she, with a well-acted dignity, "let us change the conversation." And she went away, leaving the poor count oppressed with contending emotions—joy and grief—hate and love.

The next day Diana said to the king, laughing, "Do you know, sire, that M. de Montgomery is in love with me?"

"Oh," replied he, "the Montgomeries are of old family, and nearly as noble as myself—as brave, and doubtless as gallant."

"Is that all that you have to reply, sire?"

"What am I to say, ma mie? must I absolutely hate Montgomery for having, like myself, good taste and good eyes?"

Diana, wounded, said no more, but she determined to make another effort; so when she again saw the count, she said, "What, M. de Montgomery! sadder than ever."

"Yes, madam, for I fear that I offended you."

"Not offended, monsieur, only afflicted."

"Oh, madam—I who would give my life to spare you a tear——"

"Did you not hint that I was not worthy of the love of a gentleman?"

"Oh, madam, that could not be my meaning, for I love you deeply. I only intended to say that you could not love me since you loved the king, and he you."

"The king does not love me—nor I the king."

"Heavens! then you may love me."

"I might, but I could never tell you so."

"And why, madam?"

"To save my father's life, I consented to accept the

protection of the king, but I could never do so for the Comte de Montgomery." She accompanied this speech with a look so loving that the count cried,

"Oh, madam, if you love me as I love you——"

"Well?"

"My world is you,—for three months I have lived but in your sight—I love you with all the ardor of a first passion—your wonderful beauty intoxicates me; if you love me, be the Comtesse de Montgomery—be my wife."

"Thanks! count," cried Diana, triumphantly, "I will remember your noble and generous words; meanwhile, remember that my colors are green and white."

The following day Francis the First remarked to Diana that her new adorer began to wear her colors publicly.

"Is it not his right, sire? can I do less for the man who offers me his name?"

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, indeed, sire," said Diana, who thought to re-awaken love, through jealousy.

But after a moment the king said, "If that be so as the place of grand marshal has remained vacant since the death of your first husband, I will bestow it on M. de Montgomery as a wedding present."

The ambitious Diana, with rage in her heart, said the same day to the count, "My valiant count, my noble Montgomery, I love you."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DAUPHIN.

THE marriage of Diana was arranged to take place at the end of three months from that time. The three months passed, and the count was as much in love as ever, although rumor said that Diana had been liberal in her

favours to him. Still, on one pretext or another she postponed the marriage.

The reason of this was that not long after her engagement she had remarked that the young dauphin had begun to notice her. Thereupon a new ambition awoke in her heart. The title of Comtesse de Montgomery might cover a defeat, but to be loved by the dauphin would be a triumph. Madame d'Étampes, who sneered at her age, was only loved by the father, but if she were loved by the son, to her would belong the bright future. Henri would be king—and she, always beautiful, almost a queen.

Although only nineteen he had been married for four years to Catherine de Medicis; but until moved by the beauty of Diana, he had never loved. Diana trembled however, fearing the king on the one hand, and the Comte de Montgomery on the other. But finding that the king seemed rather to encourage it, she grew bolder, and soon drew an avowal from the young prince. As for Montgomery, he loved her too blindly not to be easily deceived; and when all the court were talking of the amours of Diana and the dauphin, he alone saw nothing.

We will now let Aloyse finish the story in her own words.

“My husband,” she said, “had not been deaf to all these reports, but he had not yet made up his mind to speak to his master about them. But one evening—it was the 7th of January, 1539,—we were in the room with the count. He usually went every evening to see Madame de Poitiers, but this evening she had sent him word that she was indisposed. Suddenly M. de Langeais, M. de Boutières and the Comte de Sancerre—three gentlemen of the court—were announced. Each was wrapped in a cloak, and they all entered, laughing.

“‘You are welcome, gentlemen,’ said the count, ‘but what good chance brings you here?’

“‘A triple bet,’ replied de Boutières, ‘and your presence here makes me gain mine.’

“‘Mine,’ said De Langeais, ‘was already gained.’

“‘What was your bet, gentlemen?’

“‘Why,’ answered M. de Boutières, ‘Langeais has made a bet that the dauphin would not be at the Louvre to-night. We have just come from the Louvre, and he was not there. I bet that you would be at home to-night, and you see that I have won.’

“‘And you have won also, Sancerre, for in fact all three bets are won, and we should have won or lost together. Sancerre, M. de Montgomery, bet a hundred pistoles that Madame de Poitiers would be ill to-night.’

“Your father, Gabriel, turned frightfully pale. ‘You have gained, M. de Sancerre,’ said he, ‘for Madame de Poitiers has just let me know that she cannot receive me this evening, being indisposed.’ Then they all three laughed again, but your father said, gravely, ‘Now, gentlemen, will you be pleased to explain this enigma?’

“‘With great pleasure, but it is no great secret, only you, whom it concerns, are as usual the last to know of it.’

“‘Speak then.’

“‘My dear count, we are about to speak, for it gives us pain to see a brave gentleman so deceived, but it is on condition that you will take it philosophically—for it is not worth your anger.’

“‘I wait,’ said the count, coldly.

“‘My dear count, you doubtless know the mythology—you know the history of Endymion. When he loved Diana Phœbe, he was about twenty, and his beard was not grown, and Endymion is not at the Louvre this evening, because the lady Luna is at home.’

“‘Your proofs?’ said the count.

“‘You do not live very far from the lady Luna, go, and seek them yourself.’

“‘You are right,’ said the count, rising.

“‘Ah! count,’ said M. de Sancerre, ‘do not be imprudent—it is not good to heard the young lion.’

“‘Be easy,’ said the count, as he opened the door for them to go out. Then turning to Pierrot, he said, ‘My cloak and sword.’

“Pierrot brought them. ‘Did you know this?’ asked the count.

“‘Yes, monsieur.’

“‘And why did you not tell me?’

“‘Monsieur,’ stammered my husband.

“‘I understand—you did not call yourselves my friends.’ He was very pale, but he spoke quietly. ‘How long have these reports been current?’

“‘I believe for several weeks.’

“‘Aloyse,’ said the count, ‘bring Gabriel to me, I want to kiss him.’

“You were asleep, M. Gabriel, but I wrapped you up, and brought you to your father. He kissed you, and a tear fell on your cheek; then he said, ‘Take care of my boy, Aloyse.’ These were the last words I ever heard him speak. ‘I will go with you, monsieur,’ said my husband. ‘No, Pierrot, I wish to be alone.’

“‘But, monsieur——’

“‘I wish it.’

“Pierrot said nothing, but when the count was gone, he also took his cloak and sword. I did not try to stop him, for it was his duty to follow his master—even to death. He embraced me, and I wept bitterly as he left me. You, meanwhile, slept peacefully, that sleep, from which you woke an orphan.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

JEALOUSY.

“THE hotel in which Madame de Poitiers lived was close to ours. Pierrot followed his master at a little distance, and saw him stop at the door, and knock. The servants tried to prevent his entrance, saying that their mistress was ill in her room, but the count persisted, and Pierrot glided in also, unperceived by him. At the top of the staircase, two of Madame de Poitiers’ women met the count, and asked him what he wanted at such an hour. Ten o’clock had just struck. The count replied firmly, that he wished to see Madame de Poitiers—he spoke very loud—so that she could hear him, for her room was near. One of the women went into her, and returned saying that Madame de Poitiers was in bed, but that she would come and speak to M. de Montgomery, and begged him to wait for her in the oratory. In a few minutes Madame de Poitiers entered hastily, ‘What means this nocturnal invasion, monsieur,’ said she, ‘after the request which I made to you, not to come to me this evening?’”

“‘I will reply truly to you, madam. They tell me that I have a rival, and that this rival is the dauphin, and that he is with you this evening.’”

“‘And you believed it, since you came to see?’ said Diana, haughtily.

“‘I suffered, Diana, and I come to you to cure me.’”

“‘Well, now that you have seen me, and know that it is false, in Heaven’s name leave me, Jacques, for I want repose.’”

“‘No, Diana, for if he be not here now, there is still time for him to come, and I wish to convict them altogether of falsehood.’”

“‘Then you will remain?’

“‘I will, madam. If you are ill, go and sleep, and I will watch.’

“‘But by what right do you do this, monsieur? Am I not still free?’

“‘No, madam, you are not free to render a gentleman, whose hand you have accepted, the laughing-stock of the court.’

“‘I do not accept your pretensions, monsieur. You have no more right to remain here, than others have to laugh. You are not my husband yet——’

“‘Oh, Diana,’ cried the count passionately, ‘what do I care for their laughter. *Mon Dieu!* that is not the question, it is not my honor which cries out the loudest, it is my love. If I had been offended by the mockery of these fools, I could have drawn my sword; but my heart was wounded, and I came here. I love you, and I am jealous—you have said and proved to me that you love me, and I will kill whoever shall attack that love, which is my right—if it were the dauphin or the king himself. As sure as I live I will have revenge.’

“‘And for what, and why?’ asked, suddenly, an imperious voice behind him.

“Pierrot trembled, for through the half-lighted corridor he had seen the dauphin advance.

“‘Ah!’ cried Madame de Poitiers, sinking on a chair, ‘this is what I feared.’

“M. de Montgomery turned round and uttered a cry; then Pierrot heard him say, in a calm voice, ‘*Monseigneur*—one word, I entreat. Tell me that you are not here because you love Madame de Poitiers, and because she loves you.’

“‘M. de Montgomery,’ replied the dauphin, stifling his passion, ‘will you give me the same assurance?’

“‘I am the accepted lover of Madame de Poitiers, and

you know it,' replied M. de Montgomery, omitting, already, the title of the dauphin.

" 'A forgotten promise,' cried Henri, 'and if my rights are more recent than yours, they are not the less certain; and I will maintain them.'

" 'Oh! he speaks of his rights,' cried the count, mad with rage and jealousy. 'You dare to say that this lady is yours?'

" 'I say at least that she is not yours, and that I am here with her consent, which is, I think, more than you can say. Therefore, monsieur, I wait impatiently for you to retire.'

" 'If you are so impatient, let us retire together.'

" 'A challenge!' cried M. de Montmorency, advancing. 'You dare! monsieur, to the dauphin of France.'

" 'There is no dauphin here. There is only a man who pretends to the love of the woman that I love.'

" Then Madame de Poitiers cried, 'He insults the prince! He will kill the prince! Help!' and probably embarrassed by her situation, she ran into her own room, calling, on her way, for the escort of Monsieur le Dauphin.

" 'Oh!' cried the count, 'it is then with the swords of his servants that the dauphin fights.'

" 'No, monsieur,' replied Henri, 'mine will suffice to chastise this insolence,' and he put his hand to his sword.

" M. de Montmorency interfered, however, saying, 'Pardon, monseigneur, but he who might be king, to-morrow, has no right to risk his life thus. You are not a man, but a king; and a dauphin of France must only fight for France.'

" 'But then,' said the count, 'a dauphin of France must not tear from me all that I care for in life—that which is more to me than my honor—than my country—than my child in the cradle; for this woman has made me forget all these. Monseigneur, pardon my violence, and tell me

that I have been mistaken. You would not surely come to see a woman you loved, accompanied by Montmorency, and a guard—I should have thought of that.’

“‘I followed the prince this evening, with an escort, because we were warned that an ambush would be laid for him.’

“‘Ah, doubtless the same kind friends who warned me, instigated, no doubt, by Madame d’Étampes, who wished publicly to scandalize Madame de Poitiers. Certainly, to have a guard waiting outside was to make the affair public enough. Ah! Henri de Valois, then you proclaim her publicly for yours! There is no more doubt nor hope—you have stolen her from me, and with her my happiness. But, Henri de Valois, because you are a king’s son, that is no reason why you should cease to be a gentleman; and if you refuse me satisfaction, you are a coward.’

“‘Villain!’ cried the dauphin, drawing his sword; but M. de Montmorency threw himself once more before him, and cried, ‘Monseigneur, in my presence, you shall never cross your sword with a subject.’

“‘With a gentleman more noble than yourself,’ cried the count; ‘the Montgomeries have been sufficiently often allied to the House of France to make it no disgrace for the dauphin to fight with one of them. Oh! monseigneur, if you loved this woman as I loved her, or hated me as I do you—but no—you are but a timid child, happy to hide behind your tutor.’

“‘Let me fight, Montmorency,’ cried the dauphin, furiously.

“‘No, paques Dieu! I will not let you fight with this madman. Help, here!’ cried he, opening the door.

“Then Madame de Poitiers came out, and cried also, ‘Help! will you let your master be murdered?’

“The escort ran up, and M. de Montmorency cried,

‘Bind this madman;’ and the prince added, ‘Do not kill him.’

“The count was seized and disarmed by the six men who had entered, and Pierrot saw that his assistance was now unavailing, and that it was better to keep himself free to act as occasion served. The count, when bound, still cried, ‘Did I not say that it was your soldiers’ swords that you would oppose to mine?’

“‘You hear! M. de Montmorency,’ cried the prince, trembling with rage.

“‘Let him be gagged,’ said Montmorency. ‘I will send word what to do with him. Till then keep him carefully,’ and, drawing the dauphin with him, they went into the room where Madame de Poitiers was waiting. Pierrot followed, and listened at the door.”

CHAPTER XIX.

WHERE A WOMAN PROVES THAT A MAN IS NOT LOVED BY
HER.

“WHEN the prince entered the apartments of Madame de Poitiers, his wounded self-love was the first thing to speak. “It is at your house, and through you,” cried he, ‘that I have received my first insult.’

“‘Alas! yes, at my house, but do not say through me. Have I not suffered as much, or more than you? Am I not innocent of all this? I do not love this man—I have never loved him. I love but you, monseigneur, and my life is devoted entirely to you. Formerly, certainly, I may have given this man some vague hopes, but nothing positive—no engagement; and when you came, I forgot all else. Since that time, I swear to you, there has not been a thought of mind, nor a pulsation of my heart, that has not been for you. This Montgomery lies—he acts

in concert with my enemies, and has no rights over her who belongs solely to you. Not only I do not love him, but now I hate him. See—I do not even ask you if he be alive or dead.’

“‘Is this all true?’ asked the dauphin, still hardly convinced.

“‘We will put it to the proof,’ said M. de Montmorency. ‘M. de Montgomery lives, but he is bound and incapable of resistance. He has grievously offended the prince, but it is not a crime for which we can judge him publicly. On the other hand, for M. le Dauphin to meet him in single combat is still more impossible. What, then, is your advice, madam? What shall we do with this man?’

“‘There was a moment’s silence; Madame de Poitiers possibly had a struggle with herself before she spoke, but at last she said, ‘M. de Montgomery has been guilty of high treason. What is the punishment for that?’

“‘Death,’ replied M. de Montmorency.

“‘Then let him die,’ said she, coldly.

“All shuddered, and M. de Montmorency said, ‘Indeed, madam, you do not love this man.’

“‘But,’ said the dauphin, ‘I do not wish him to die.’

“‘That is also my opinion, monseigneur,’ said Montmorency, ‘although probably not for the same reasons. What you utter from generosity, I recommend through prudence. M. de Montgomery has powerful friends, and it is known to several that he was to meet us here to-night. If he be loudly demanded to-morrow, we do not wish to have a corpse to show. We must say that M. de Montgomery has fled, or that he is wounded; but we must always be able to say that he lives. If we manage thus, they will talk of him for a few days, but before a month has passed he will be forgotten; friends soon forget. He must not die, but he must disappear.’

“‘So be it,’ said the dauphin. ‘He has friends in England—let him go there.’

“‘Not so, monseigneur; exile is not enough. Do you wish him to tell in England how he has insulted you?’

“‘Oh, do not recall that!’

“‘But I must recall it, to prevent you from committing an imprudence. The governor of the Châtelet is my friend, and devoted to his majesty, and will be deaf and dumb as the prison walls—let M. de Montgomery be taken there this night; a good cell will keep him safe, and if there be an outcry, the register of the Châtelet will show that he, accused of high treason, awaits in prison the judgment on his crime. Then, if the prison prove unhealthy, and he die before the trial, that will not be our blame.’

“‘Oh, M. de Montmorency!’ cried the dauphin—

“‘Be easy, monseigneur; we shall not have to proceed to such extremities. The inquiries will die away of themselves, his friends will forget him, and he may live in the prison, though dead to the world.’

“‘But has he not a son?’

“‘Yes, a child, whom they will tell that his father’s fate is uncertain, and who, if he grow up, will have his own interests to attend to, and will not seek to explore a history fifteen or twenty years old.’

“‘That is a very good plan,’ said Madame de Poitiers, ‘and I approve of it.’

“‘But I disapprove,’ cried the dauphin.

“‘Monseigneur, leave all that to me. I take all the responsibility on myself——’

“‘It is a crime.’

“‘Well, let us not be precipitate. Let us assure ourselves of the person of the count, and we can afterwards decide how it is best to dispose of him.’”

“‘So be it,’ said the dauphin, whose feeble will gladly accepted this compromise.

“‘Let us, then, return to the Louvre. To-morrow I will send him back to you,’ he continued, addressing Diana, ‘for I see that you really love him.’

“‘Is monseigneur the dauphin also convinced?’ said she.

“‘Yes, you love me, Diana—terribly indeed; and I need to believe it. I should feel too much grief in losing you—your love is necessary to my existence.’

“‘Oh! you make me happy,’ cried Diana, with a passionate accent, kissing the hand which the prince held out to her.

“‘Au revoir, Diana.’

“‘Au revoir, Henri.’

“While the dauphin went down, M. de Montmorency opened the door of the oratory, and said to the men who guarded the count, ‘I will send some one to you immediately who will tell you what to do with your prisoner. Till then, watch him well—you answer for him with your lives.’

“‘I will watch,’ said Madame de Poitiers, from her room.”

CHAPTER XX.

A USELESS DEVOTION.

“PIERROT saw that his master was lost, beyond redemption, if he allowed M. de Montmorency’s messenger time to return. He had remarked, however, that no intimation had been given to those who guarded the count by which they should recognize the messenger, so after waiting a short time he went up and knocked at the door.

“‘Who is there?’ asked a voice from the inside.

“ ‘ From M. de Montmorency,’ he answered. They opened the door, and Pierrot entered boldly. ‘ I am, said he, ‘ the squire of M. de Manfol ; we were returning from the Louvre, when we met M. de Montmorency, accompanied by a tall young man, wrapped in a cloak. After some minutes’ conversation, M. de Montmorency gave me some instructions, which I am here to fulfil, but you must first let me speak in private to the prisoner, so remove the gag.’ ”

“ The man hesitated, and said, ‘ Have you no written order?’ ”

“ ‘ How could they write in the street? Besides, M. de Montmorency said that he had told you to expect me.’ ”

“ ‘ That is true.’ ”

“ ‘ Then let me speak to him. Withdraw out of hearing for a few minutes.’ ”

“ He was obeyed. ‘ My brave Pierrot,’ said the count, ‘ how do you come to be here?’ ”

“ ‘ I will tell you, monsieur, at another time ; but now the moments are precious.’ He then rapidly explained to the count his intended fate, and that he was there to frustrate the designs of his enemies.

“ ‘ But what can we do ? We are but two against eight.’ ”

“ ‘ Let me act, and you are saved.’ ”

“ ‘ Alas ! I care little ; Diana betrays me, and loves me no longer.’ ”

“ ‘ Think of your child, monsieur.’ ”

“ ‘ You are right, Pierrot, I have not thought sufficiently of him. But if you fail in saving me, I do not wish to bequeath to him the heritage of my misfortunes, and to leave to him the same enemies who crush me ; I wish him to grow up happy. Therefore, swear to me, Pierrot, never to reveal to him my unhappy fate.’ ”

“ ‘ I swear, monsieur,’ said Pierrot ; ‘ and now let me act.’ Then, turning to the guard, he said, ‘ I am satisfied

with my examination of the prisoner ; untie him, and let him go.'

" ' Let him go ! M. de Montmorency ordered us to guard him safely, on the peril of our lives.'

" ' Do you refuse to obey me, who come in his name ?'

" ' I hesitate to do that, certainly.'

" ' So be it, then ; but you must answer to M. de Montmorency for your disobedience, I wash my hands of it.'

" ' Are you certain that it was M. de Montmorency, and that those were his orders ?'

" ' Fool ! how should I have known that you were guarding a prisoner if he had not told me ?'

" ' Well, then, I suppose we must unbind him ;' and they had commenced doing so, when Madame de Poitiers, hearing the sound of voices, appeared at the door, and seeing what they were about, cried out,—

" ' How dare you unbind the prisoner ?'

" ' We are obeying the orders of M. de Montmorency, madam.'

" ' Impossible ! Who brought you this order ?'

" They pointed to Pierrot, who had been trying to keep out of sight.

" ' That man !' cried she ; ' he is the squire of the prisoner. See what you were about to do.'

" ' It is false,' said Pierrot ; ' I am the squire of M. de Manffol, and I am sent by M. de Montmorency.'

" ' Who says that he comes from M. de Montmorency ?' said a man, who entered the room at that moment. ' I am sent by him, and here is his ring to show it. What ! you have dared to unbind the prisoner ? Let him be rebound and gagged immediately.'

" The count never spoke, but Pierrot cried, ' Good, madam, you go far in the path of infamy. Three times within an hour you have betrayed your lover.'

“‘Seize that man!’ cried she, furiously.

“Pierrot rushed towards his master, and began to cut the new bonds with which he was tied, crying, ‘Let us sell our lives dearly, monsieur!’ But he had only time to free the count’s left arm, before a violent blow laid him senseless at the feet of his master.”

CHAPTER XXI.

HOW THE TRACE OF BLOOD IS NEVER EFFACED.

“PIERROT knew no more. When he returned to consciousness, his first sensation was of intense cold, and, opening his eyes, he found himself on the damp ground. It was still night, but there was sufficient light to show him that he was in the Cemetery des Innocents. They had doubtless thought him dead, and thrown him there.

“He tried to rise, but the pain of his wound was intense. However, by a great effort, he contrived to walk a few paces, and gradually reached the street. There he saw a wagoner going by, and he asked him to allow him to sit by him. The man consented; and in this way he came nearly up to our house in the Rue des Jardins, and when he at last reached home, it was six o’clock in the morning. In spite of the cold, my anxiety had kept me watching at the window all night, and as soon as I saw my husband coming I ran down to open the door.

“‘Silence! on your life!’ said he to me; ‘utter no cry, but help me to my room.’ He got up-stairs with my assistance, but when I began to undress him his blood covered my hands, and I saw his wounds large and gaping.

“‘Hush!’ said he again; ‘do not cry out.’

“‘But at least let me go for a surgeon,’ said I sobbing.

"It is useless," said he ; 'I know that my wounds are mortal, I should not have lived so long had I not been upheld by a feeling stronger than pain. God, who sooner or later punishes murderers, has doubtless prolonged my life so far to serve His future designs ; but soon fever will come on, and then no doctor can do anything for me.'

"I begged him at least to spare himself and take a little repose.

"No," replied he ; 'I must speak while I can.' Then he told me all that I have just related to you, but not without frequent and long interruptions from weakness and pain. Towards the middle of the day the pain seemed to leave him ; then he made me repeat the oath that he had taken not to reveal to you this history, as long as there was danger for you in it. This oath, monsieur, I have just broken, but it was to save your life, and I trust that I shall be pardoned.

"When I am dead," continued Pierrot, 'shut up this house, dismiss the servants, and go to Montgomery with Gabriel, but do not live at the castle ; bring him up quietly in our own house, so that his enemies may forget him ; the chaplain and the steward will aid you in your task. Let the young count himself be ignorant of his rank until he be eighteen.' Then he told me that M. de Montmorency supposed him to be dead, and therefore he desired me to keep his presence there, and his death, both secret ; to tell no one of his being there, and in the dead of night, when all were asleep, to carry his body down to the caves of the lords of Brissac, to whom the hotel formerly belonged, that in this way M. de Montmorency would believe the secret dead with him, whereas, if he knew me to be privy to it, he would not hesitate to destroy me as well.

"I promised all he asked. Towards evening fever

came on, then he said to me, 'Aloyse, give me some water.' I, in my ignorance, had offered him some repeatedly, but he always refused. I got him some then, but before drinking it, he said, 'One last kiss, and remember all I have said.' I covered his face with my kisses and tears; then he asked for the crucifix, and placing it to his lips murmured, 'My God, have mercy on me!' and fell back dead.

"I went as usual to see you put to bed, and although I wept incessantly no one was astonished, for all were in consternation at the disappearance of the count and Pierrot. About two in the morning, after having washed the blood from my husband's corpse I wrapped it in a sheet, and descended with my dear burden, still heavier to my heart than to my arms, and it was not without great difficulty and many stoppages that I reached the cave. I found an empty tomb in which I placed the body. The fall of the heavy lid as I reclosed it struck such terror to my heart that I turned and fled and never stopped until I arrived in my own room. I had still to burn the sheets and the clothes, which might have betrayed us, but by daylight my task was completed.

"A long illness followed so much exertion and emotion on my part, but as soon as I was able to travel I went to Montgomery with you as I had promised. What M. de Montmorency had foreseen happened. For a time every one talked of the mysterious disappearance of the Comte de Montgomery, but new subjects and interests succeeded, and it was forgotten."

"Well," cried Gabriel, "all this tells me nothing as to who Diana is. But if my father lives I will find him. It is now both the son and the lover who is seeking. But have you never learned anything which could indicate the prison in which my father was confined?"

"Nothing, monsieur, but that M. de Montmorency

said that the governor of the Châtelet was a devoted friend of his."

"The Châtelet!" cried Gabriel, bursting into tears, the remembrance of the miserable old man, whom he had seen there in that horrid cell flashed suddenly across his mind.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HEROIC RANSOM.

ON the following day, Gabriel took his way with a firm step, and a calm aspect, to the Louvre, to ask for an audience of the king. After deep consideration he had decided that defiance towards a crowned enemy would be worse than useless, and he had resolved to make his request humbly and respectfully.

As he entered he met the Cardinal de Lorraine, who addressed him in a friendly way, and asked him whither he was going. On Gabriel replying, "to the king," he replied that he also was going to see his majesty, and would conduct him, "although," he added, "the king has very much to occupy him. I suppose, M. d'Exmès, you have heard the sad news?"

"No, indeed, I know nothing."

"Really! well, M. de Montmorency, the skilful general, encountered the Spanish troops yesterday on the plains of Gibercourt; and although he had an equal number of men, admirable cavalry, and the élite of the French chivalry, he has sustained a dreadful defeat. He himself is wounded and taken prisoner, and with him numbers of other nobles."

"Great heavens!" cried Gabriel, struck in spite of his private griefs by this public misfortune, "and St. Quentin?"

"It still held out at the departure of the courier, and M. de Coligny has sworn to be buried under the ruins rather than surrender ; but it is feared that he cannot maintain himself much longer."

"But what would become of France?"

"God only knows—but here we are."

They entered, and found the king alone with Madame de Poitiers.

"Ah! M. de Lorraine," said he, "what a frightful catastrophe, who could have dreamed of it? Your brother is on his way home is he not?"

"Yes, sire ; he is at Lyons."

"Oh! if he were but here. In his hands and yours I place the salvation of France. Write to him, M. le Cardinal, and explain to him our dreadful condition. Pray write at once. In this cabinet is all you want. A courier waits below ready to carry your letter."

"I obey, your majesty, and be sure that my brother will be equally ready, and will do all that a man can do ; but if he fail let your majesty remember how desperate the affairs are that are placed in his hands."

Gabriel had remained standing, his young and generous heart profoundly touched by the extremity to which France was reduced ; and when the king cried, "Oh! if St. Quentin—my good city—could but hold out for eight days, M. de Guise would be here, and all would yet be well ; but if it falls the enemy will march direct to Paris. I would give a diamond for each of its stones if they would hold out."

"Sire, it shall hold out for more than eight days!" exclaimed Gabriel.

"M. d'Exmès! how came you here?"

"I came with the Cardinal de Lorraine, sire."

"Oh! that is quite right. But what do you mean by saying that it shall resist."

"Sire, if a man were to defend this city, and his energetic will were to inspire the garrison to resist while one stone remained on another, and were he thus to save France, would you promise to grant him one request?"

"Certainly," cried Henri, "what a king could do for him I would."

"It is a bargain, sire ; for it is simply a pardon that I ask for, and neither titles nor gold."

"But where is the man who can do this?"

"Before you, sire. I am a simple Captain of your Guards, but I feel in my arm a superhuman energy, for I have to save at once my country and my father."

"Your father! M. d'Exmès."

"I am not M. d'Exmès, sire ; I am Gabriel de Montgomery, son of Jacques de Montgomery whom you remember."

The king turned deadly pale, as did also Madame de Poitiers.

"Yes, sire," continued Gabriel, "I am the Vicomte de Montgomery, who in exchange for preserving St. Quentin to you for eight days asks only the liberty of his father."

"Your father, monsieur, has disappeared, and is probably dead. What do I know of him?"

"But I know, sire. My father has been eighteen years in the Châtelet waiting for death, or for mercy. Whatever his crime may have been (of which I am ignorant) surely he has expiated it sufficiently. He went into prison a young man, and would come out, old and feeble, and incapable of injuring any one. Oh! sire, restore to this poor prisoner a life which he would henceforth pass in obscurity. Remember, sire, that we are ordained to forgive if we would be forgiven."

The king and Madame de Poitiers exchanged a look of terror, as if to interrogate each other.

"Observe, sire," continued Gabriel, "that I do not come to say that he was condemned secretly, and without being heard, and that I do not call on all the nobility of France to aid me in procuring redress. I respect the privileges of the Crown, and the secrets of the past; and I only ask permission to preserve St. Quentin for you. Surely, sire, that is worth an old man's liberty; and I feel that I can do it, for my cause is pure and holy, my will is strong, and I feel that God is with me. If you require it I will even undertake to wrest a city from the enemy."

Madame de Poitiers gave an incredulous smile.

"I understand your smile, madam. You think that I shall fall before I accomplish my task. *Mon Dieu!* it is possible. My presentiments may deceive me. But if the enemy enter before the eight days I will die on the breach. I can do no more. I shall die on the field, and my father in his cell—the debt will be canceled, and the creditor be forgotten."

"That is true," whispered Diana to the king.

"But, monsieur, if you fall, leaving your task unaccomplished, how do I know that some one else will not start up, armed with this secret, and make the same request?"

"I swear to you, sire, that were I dead all would die with me, and you would never be again importuned on the subject."

Henri, always undecided, turned towards Diana for advice.

"Sire," said she, "if you ask for my advice, agree to what M. d'Exmès asks, and pass your royal word to grant his request if he keeps his promise."

"Allow me first to ask you, monsieur, how you became possessed of this secret."

"Sire," said Gabriel, solemnly, "an old squire of my father's—Pierrot Travigny—who was killed in the events

which led to the disappearance of the count, rose from his grave to tell me."

At this answer, the king turned paler than before, and even Madame de Poitiers shuddered. The belief in apparitions and specters was at that time universal, and their uneasy consciences soon took alarm.

"Enough, monsieur," said the king, "I grant all you ask. You may now retire."

"Then I may set out, relying on your majesty's promise?"

"Yes, I give you my word as a king and a gentleman."

Gabriel, with joy in his heart, bowed and retired.

"At last he is gone," said Henri, with a sigh of relief.

"Well, sire," said Diana, "you did right to promise him, and to send him to St. Quentin—he is sure to fall there."

At this moment the Cardinal de Lorraine returned with the letter for his brother, and the king could not reply.

Gabriel, when he left the king, directed his steps towards Madame de Castro's old apartments, hoping to find some one there who could give him some information regarding her. Jacinthe had gone with her mistress, but Denise, the second maid, had remained, and as soon as she saw Gabriel she cried,—

"Oh! M. d'Exmès, do you bring me news of my mistress? We are so anxious about her."

"And why so, Denise?"

"Oh, monsieur, do you not know where she is? She is in the convent of the Benedictines at St. Quentin, now besieged, and perhaps taken by the Spaniards."

"Surely," thought Gabriel, "the finger of God is in this. He ever animates my feelings as a son by means of those of a lover. Thanks! Denise! here is something for your good news."

He went down quickly to the court of the Louvre, where

Martin Guerre waited for him. "We are going to St. Quentin, Martin," said he. "We are going where they fight, and must set off at once."

"Oh, so much the better; I may have become a drinker and a gambler, but I am not a coward!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

JEAN PEUQUOY THE WEAVER.

THE military chiefs and principal bourgeois of St. Quentin were assembled in the town-hall. The city still held out, but the despair of the inhabitants was at its height, and they began to say, "That as it was impossible to save the city—as it was only a question of a day or two, more or less, it was better to abridge their sufferings." Gaspard de Coligny, the brave admiral, thought differently. He knew that each day might be the saving of the kingdom, but he could do little against the general discouragement and discontent. This meeting was his last effort to try and inspire further resistance.

He began by an appeal to their patriotism, but this was received with a mournful silence. Then he turned to Captain Oger, one of his bravest officers, and asked for his opinion, trusting that he would support him.

"If you do me the honor to ask for my opinion, monsieur," replied he, "I must say, with regret, but with perfect conviction, that St. Quentin can resist no longer. If we could hold out for a week—for four, or even two days—I should say that these two days would give time to the army to rally, and might save the country, and we will hold out to the last stone and the last man. But I am convinced that the next assault must be successful.

Is it not then preferable to save what we can of the city by a capitulation, while there is yet time ? ”

“ Yes, yes,” cried many voices.

“ You speak, Lauxford,” said M. de Coligny, to the officer commanding the engineers. “ Tell us honestly—can the fortifications hold out longer or not ? ”

“ Monsieur, four breaches are already made ; one large enough to admit twenty men—and we have already lost two hundred men there. The rest of the walls are sound, but these four breaches are, I fear, four mortal wounds, for which there is no remedy.”

The murmurs became louder than ever on the strength of this opinion, when suddenly a voice of thunder cried, “ Silence ! ”

All were immediately silent, for they recognized the voice of Jean Peuquoy, the head of the corporation of weavers, and a much respected citizen.

“ Listen to me, my dear friends and fellow-citizens,” said he. “ M. de Coligny will, I hope, do us the justice to acknowledge that from the first we have done our best to assist him. We have given our provisions, our goods, and our money, and we have not been backward in fighting ourselves. We trusted that our king would think of his brave Quentinois, and send us aid. He did so. He sent M. de Montmorency, and we thanked God and the king, but the fatal battle of St. Laurent destroyed our hopes. The constable was taken, and his army forced to retreat. It is now five days since that battle, and the enemy have made the most of their time—their cannon has scarcely ceased to sound—indeed, you may hear it now. We have listened vainly for some sound from the other side, announcing to us further assistance, but none comes. Our resources are exhausted, but the king has the whole monarchy to save. If he thinks of us, it is only to ask if we shall live long enough to save the rest of

France. But there is no chance of help, nor is there any salvation for us—our walls and our soldiers fall around us—we are lost!”

“Yes! yes! we must yield!” they all cried with one voice.

“Not so,” replied Jean Peuquoy; “we must die. MM. Lauxford and Oger say that we cannot resist, but M. de Coligny says we ought to resist. Let us resist. You know, citizens, whether I love our good city or not; how devoted I am to her; but the general has, in his wisdom, weighed the fortunes of St. Quentin against those of all France, and he has pronounced it right that she should die like a sentinel at his post. He who murmurs is a coward! and he who disobeys is a traitor! If the walls fall, we must make new ones with our bodies. Let us gain two days—even an hour, at the price of our lives and our goods, for M. de Coligny declares that it may save France. The responsibility is on him—our duty is to die, when he tells us that we die for France.”

All were silent.

“You do not reply. You will give your lives to the king, and will leave your wives widows, and your children orphans; but you cannot yourselves pronounce their doom. At least you can cry, ‘Vive la France!’”

A few faint cries responded, but sadly and mournfully.

Gaspard de Coligny then rose in much agitation. “Listen!” said he. “I cannot accept this fearful responsibility; and, since you are all against me, I also think your sacrifice would be useless——”

“What! are you also going to speak of surrender, M. de Coligny?” interrupted a voice.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GABRIEL AT HIS WORK.

"Who dares to interrupt me thus?" cried M. de Coligny. "A peasant!"

"I," said a man, advancing, clothed like a peasant of the neighborhood. "Not a peasant, but the Vicomte d'Exmès, captain of the king's guards, who comes here in his majesty's name."

"In the king's name!" cried many voices.

"Yes, in the name of the king, who does not abandon his brave Quentinois, but thinks of them ever. I arrived in this disguise three hours ago, and in this time I have examined your defenses and heard your deliberations. But what I have seen does not correspond with what I have heard. Whence comes this sudden discouragement, fit only for women and children, and which has caused a universal panic? Raise your heads, and revive your courage! and if you cannot conquer, let your defeat be more glorious than a victory! I come from your ramparts, and I say that you can hold out another fortnight, but the king asks only a week to save France.

"Let me come to your aid," he continued. "You, M. de Lauxford, say that you have four breaches open to the enemy. Well, that on the side of the Faubourg d'Isle is the worst. The Spaniards are masters of the abbey, and keep up so brisk a fire, that our workmen dare not show themselves. Allow me to suggest a very simple and excellent method which I saw adopted at Civitella. We will make a rampart with old boats filled with earth—the balls lose themselves in the earth, and our workmen can proceed in perfect safety.

"At the hamlet of Remicourt, the enemy are under-

mining the wall, it is true; but it is there, monsieur, that we must countermine, and not at the Porte St. Jean, where it is not only useless, but dangerous. You should move your men from the west to the south. You will say, that the Porte St. Jean and the Boulevard St. Martin will be left defenseless. But fifty men at each point will suffice to protect them. You may say again, that you cannot spare these one hundred men. Well, I bring them to you."

A murmur of surprise and joy ran round the circle.

"Yes," continued Gabriel, "I met, not far from here, the Baron de Vaulpergues with three hundred lances, and he has promised to come to your assistance. I undertook to come here, braving all danger, through the enemy's camp, to reconnoiter the places where he may most safely enter with his men. I have come and arranged my plan. I shall return to Vaulpergues—we shall divide his company into three parts. I myself will take the command of one, and we will each direct our steps, under cover of the night, to a different point. It will be very unlucky if we do not manage to introduce at least one hundred men into the place."

Universal acclamations hailed his spirited address, which reanimated all hearts.

"Oh!" cried Jean Peuquoy, "now we can fight and conquer."

"Fight! yes," said Gabriel; "conquer, I do not dare to hope; I do not wish to make your position better than it is; I only wish to show you that the king does not abandon you, and that you may make your resistance useful, and your defeat glorious. It is probable that the 60,000 men who attack you, will take the place at last, but do not think that your brave resistance will make your position worse in the end. Philibert Emanuel is a brave soldier, who loves courage, and will not punish it,

and if you hold out for ten or twelve days, you will have saved France. Your children's children will be proud of you. The enemy may destroy your walls, but they cannot destroy the memory of your courage. Cry then with me, 'Vive la France!'

"Vive la France! Vive le roi!" cried a hundred voices with enthusiasm.

"And now," continued Gabriel, "to the ramparts, and reanimate by your example those who await you there; to-morrow another one hundred men shall join you."

"To the ramparts!" they echoed as they rushed off to communicate their new-born hopes and enthusiasms to the rest of the inhabitants.

Gaspard de Coligny, the worthy and generous chief, had listened in astonishment and admiration. He now advanced towards Gabriel, and cried, "Thanks, monsieur; you have saved St. Quentin and me from shame, and the king and France from destruction."

"Alas! I have done nothing yet, monsieur. I must now return to Vaulpergues, and God only knows whether I shall go out in safety as I came in, and succeed in introducing my men."

CHAPTER XXV.

WHERE MARTIN GUERRE IS UNFORTUNATE.

GABRIEL and the admiral talked together for some time, and arranged the best method of introducing the troops, and they parted with mutual esteem and admiration.

Gabriel's next care was to learn something of Diana. He had asked the name of the superior of the convent, and had heard that it was La mère Monique. Then he asked where he could find her. "In the post where there

is the most danger," was the reply. He found her indeed at the Faubourg d'Isle, and she received him as the saviour of the city.

"You will not be surprised, madam," said he, "that coming from the king, I ask for news of his daughter, Madame de Castro. She is well, I trust?"

"Yes, M. le Vicomte, but I insisted upon her remaining in the convent to take some rest to-day, for none of us have equaled her in courage and devotedness. She was always ready, and to be found everywhere exercising her kindly charities. She is truly a worthy daughter of France. It has been her wish that her rank should not be known here, and she calls herself by the name of our order, Sister Benedicta; but our patients, who do not know Latin, call her Sister Benie."

"Can I see her to-morrow if I return?" asked Gabriel.

"You will return, my brother; and wherever you hear the loudest cries and groans, there you will find Sister Benie."

Gabriel went away with a heart filled with fresh hope and courage.

Favored by the night, he and Martin Guerre passed noiselessly through the breach, and escaped into the open country; but they were not yet out of danger. Detachments of the enemy scoured the country night and day, and any rencontre with them might be fatal. They came presently to a place where there were two roads.

"Martin," said Gabriel, "here are two roads, which each lead to the wood d'Angimont, where the Baron de Vaulpergues waits for us. If we remain together, we may both be taken, but separate, we double our chances of success. You take this road, it is the longest, but M. de Coligny thinks it the safest. Still you must pass the encampment of the Walloons, where M. de Montmorency is a prisoner. If you meet any troops, pass yourself off

for a peasant of Angimont, returning after having delivered provisions to the Spaniards at St. Quentin. Imitate as well as you can the patois of Picardy—that is not difficult with strangers. Err rather on the side of impudence than that of hesitation. If you hesitate, you are lost.”

“ Oh, be easy, monsieur, I shall manage well.”

“ I,” said Gabriel, “ will go this way, for being the direct road to Paris, it is the most dangerous. I may never arrive, but do not let them wait for me more than half an hour. You know what is to be done—the troops are to be divided into two detachments, and each is to advance by a different road. We cannot hope to succeed with all, but the loss of one may save the others. Adieu, my brave Martin. We may never meet again ; give me your hand, and may God protect you ! ”

“ Oh ! monsieur, I pray most for you—I am not good for much. Take care of yourself, monsieur.”

So the master and squire separated. At first all went well with Martin, but as he approached the camp, the sentinels were numerous. All at once he found himself between two troops of men—one of horse, and the other of foot soldiers, and a loud “ Qui vive,” showed him that he had been observed. “ Now,” thought he, “ the time has come, to show the impudence that my master recommended to me ; ” so he began to sing in a loud voice.

“ Who goes there ? ” cried a voice.

“ A peasant of Angimont,” answered Martin, imitating the patois, and he recommenced his song.

“ Stop that infernal song, and halt,” cried the same voice.

Martin knew that resistance was useless, so he stopped. “ By St. Quentin,” said he, “ why do you wish to stop a poor peasant, already detained too late, and who wants to get home to his wife and his little ones ? ”



"It is Arnold du Thill," cried a dozen voices, with frightful unanimity. Page 107.

The Two Dianas

"How do we know that you are not a spy? You must go with us to the camp."

"To the camp—well, so much the better, for I will speak to the chief. Ah, you arrest an unlucky peasant, who has been carrying provisions to your comrades before St. Quentin; I'll be hanged if ever I do so again; all your army may starve first. But I will complain to the general—I have done no harm, and shall be rewarded, and you will be punished."

"Comrade," said another, "I think he speaks the truth."

"I would let him go immediately, but that I cannot help thinking that I recognize him, even by this imperfect light. We shall see clearly at the camp." So Martin was placed between two soldiers and taken with them.

The moment the light of the torches fell on his face, the man who had spoken before, cried out, "Par le diable! I was right. It is really that wretch. Comrades, do you not recognize him?"

"Oh, yes! yes!" cried one after another.

"You recognize me?" cried poor Martin, who began to be seriously alarmed. "I am Martin Cornouiller, of Angimont; now let me go."

"Let you go, wretch! villain!"

"For whom do you take me, then?"

"It is Arnold du Thill," cried a dozen voices, with frightful unanimity.

"Arnold du Thill! who is that?" said Martin.

"Oh! deny yourself," said the first speaker; "of course you are not the coward who promised me a ransom, and whom I treated so well, and who last night fled, carrying away all my money, and my dear little Gudule. Wretch! what have you done with Gudule?"

"What have I done with her?" cried poor Martin. "Oh, I give myself up, if my aliases are beginning again."

I can say no more ; do what you like with me, at all events I am glad to know that I am called Arnold du Thill." And he attempted no further remonstrances or resistance, and as he could not say what had become of Gudule, they kept him prisoner.

CHAPTER XXVI.

RUSES DE GUERRE.

WHEN Gabriel, after many escapes, entered the wood where the Baron de Vaulpergues waited for him, the first person he saw, was, as he thought, Martin Guerre.

"So it is you, Martin?" he said.

"Myself, monsieur."

"How long have you arrived?"

"About an hour ago."

"Really—but it seems to me that you have changed your dress since we parted."

"Yes, monsieur ; I changed with a peasant, thinking his dress more likely to escape detection than my own."

"Good ; and did you have no dangerous adventures?"

"None, monsieur."

"On the contrary," said the Baron de Vaulpergues, "he came here accompanied by a very pretty girl, apparently a Flemish vivandière. She was crying, the poor little thing, but he sent her away, remorselessly."

"Oh ! Martin, Martin ; here is the old man reappearing."

"Say rather, the young one," replied he. "But pardon, monsieur ; you have something more serious to occupy yourself with than my concerns."

"Well," said the baron, "my advice is, not to start for half-an-hour. It is not yet twelve o'clock, and I do not wish to arrive at St. Quentin before three o'clock in the morning. It is the best time for a surprise."

"Just so, monsieur; that is M. de Coligny's advice. We are to arrive at three in the morning if we reach St. Quentin at all."

"Oh! we shall get there, monsieur," said Arnold, "I profited by going through the camp of the Walloons, and undertake to guide you through it with perfect safety."

"That is wonderful, Martin; in so short a time to observe so much."

We must now explain the adventures of Arnold du Thill.

After having escaped—thanks to Gudule—from the enemy's camp, they had wandered in the woods for some time, fearing to fall again into their hands. Towards night, he came upon a party of Frenchmen, and joined them. Then he dismissed poor Gudule, who returned, weeping, to the camp. As for Arnold, they all saluted him as Martin Guerre, and asked after his master. By listening to all that was said, and saying as little as possible, he picked up sufficient of what was going on, not to betray himself; and by the time that the Vicomte d'Exmès arrived was quite au fait as to the state of affairs. He only feared to see Gabriel arrive with his squire, and was considering what he should do, when, to his great delight, he saw him approach alone. Then he abandoned himself to chance, and guessing that Martin had fallen into the hands of the Spaniards, he audaciously took his place.

In the city the anxiety was great; for the safety or ruin of all depended upon the success of Gabriel's attempt. The admiral, unable to sleep, wandered about the places where the attack was about to be made. Just as three o'clock struck, he heard the cry of an owl.

"God be thanked! here they are," said he, and the signal was responded to.

For some minutes after there was a dead silence. Then suddenly came the sound of firearms, and a general

discharge followed. The first detachment had been discovered.

"A hundred brave men killed," cried Coligny, and without saying more, he ran to the Boulevard St. Martin, where one of the other detachments was expected. The same cry was heard, replied to and followed by the same alarm and general skirmishing.

"Two hundred martyrs," cried Coligny, and he hastened to the third point. But here nothing was heard. Coligny thought, that terrified by the fate of their comrades, they had abandoned the enterprise, and a burning tear of despair and disappointment rolled over his cheek. Suddenly, however, the governor, Du Breuil, who was standing by him, pointed to some dark figures moving in the moat.

"Are they friends or enemies?" he whispered.

Coligny looked earnestly at them—then, as they approached nearer, he gave the concerted signal. It was immediately replied to, and the admiral, transported with joy, threw open the gate, and one hundred cavaliers, wrapped in black cloaks, entered with a noiseless step, which as they drew near, Coligny could account for by seeing that the feet of the horses were covered with rags.

This expedient, of which only Gabriel had thought, had saved him and his men.

One hundred men were not much, perhaps, but they would suffice to keep the enemy for a time, from two of the breaches. The news soon circulated, and a general rejoicing was manifested. Gabriel said, gravely, "No rejoicing—think of the two hundred who have fallen."

"Yes," replied Coligny, "we think of and deplore them, but you, M. d'Exmès—how can I thank you, for you have saved St. Quentin twice?"

Gabriel pressed his hand, and said, "M. de Coligny, you shall tell me that in a few days."

CHAPTER XXVII.

ARNOLD.

GABRIEL, exhausted by fatigue, slept until a late hour on the following day. It was the admiral himself who awoke him, to beg him to be present at the council about to be held.

"One word only, to my squire, and I am at your orders," he replied.

He then called for Martin, and on Arnold entering he said,—“My good Martin, go to the Convent of the Benedictines, and ask for the superior, and beg her to tell the sister Benie that the Vicomte d'Exmès, an envoy from the king, will call to see her in an hour, and to request her to wait for him.”

“Yes, monsieur,” replied Arnold, and he set off at once. He asked for La mère Monique, as directed, and when she came, he said, “Ah ! ma mère, I am so glad to have found you ; my poor master would have been so sad, if I could not have fulfilled my commission to you, and to Madame de Castro.”

“Who is your master ?”

“My master is the Vicomte d'Exmès. You know him, I believe ?”

“Certainly, I know our valiant deliverer ; we have prayed much for him. But I hoped to have the honor of seeing him here.”

“He is coming but M. de Coligny detains him, and in his impatience he has sent me with a message to Madame de Castro. Do not look astonished, madam ; I am an old servant, and my master has no secrets from me.”

“Well,” said Mère Monique, “Sister Benie expects

him impatiently, for she longs to hear news of her father, from whom he comes."

"Yes," said Arnold, with an affectedly foolish laugh, "who sent him to St. Quentin, but not to Madame de Castro, I warrant."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh! madam, I am so glad that you assist my dear master and Madame de Castro in their love."

"Their love!"

"Of course Madame de Castro has told you all about it. Oh! you deny it from modesty. But I think your conduct sublime, and most courageous. The king would certainly be in a towering passion if he knew that they had met."

"Mon Dieu!" cried the superior, clasping her hands in terror, "a king and a father deceived—and my name mixed up with amorous intrigues."

"And see! here comes my master himself, to see his adored Diana."

As Gabriel advanced and before he had time to speak, the superior, with an air of great dignity, said, "Not a word, M. le Vicomte, I know now, by what right, and with what intentions, you wish to approach Madame de Castro. Do not hope that I shall lend my aid to projects which I must fear are unworthy of a gentleman. I will do my best to prevent Sister Benie from meeting you. She is free, I know, and has pronounced no vows, but as long as she remains in this asylum, I shall protect—not her love—but her honor." Then bowing coldly, she withdrew.

"What does this mean?" cried Gabriel in amazement.

"I do not know, monsieur; the superior received me very badly, and said that she knew all your designs, but that she would oppose them, and act according to the wishes of the king. And she added, that Madame de Castro loved you no longer, if she had ever done so."

"Diana loves me no longer!" cried Gabriel, turning pale. "But, alas! perhaps it is for the best. However, I will see her once more, and prove to her that I am neither culpable nor indifferent. You must help me, Martin, to procure the interview."

"Monsieur knows," replied Arnold, humbly, "that I am devoted to his will, and am ready to do my best to assist him." And he followed Gabriel, laughing inwardly at what he had done. On his return, he added to a list of charges which he had against the Constable de Montmorency, these items.

"For having conducted skilfully the reinforcements which M. d'Exmès was bringing to the nephew of M. de Montmorency—100 crowns.

"For having, after entering into the service of the Vicomte d'Exmès under the name of Martin Guerre, denounced him to the superior of the convent of the Benedictines, as the lover of Madame de Castro, and thus prevented their meeting according to the wishes of M. de Montmorency—200 crowns."

The next day Gabriel sent him again to the convent, and we may judge how he performed his mission. Gabriel would have gone himself, but at ten in the morning the enemy made a fierce assault, and he was obliged to be present at the defense. He performed prodigies of valor, and conducted himself as though he had a hundred lives to lose.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SISTER BENIE.

It was a serene and splendid evening in August, and the blue and calm sky was studded with stars, the moon having not yet risen.

This sweet tranquillity contrasted singularly with the

noise and turmoil of the day. The Spaniards had made two assaults, which had both been repulsed, but not without a heavy loss to the little garrison, which it could ill bear. The enemy, on the contrary, had powerful resources, and fresh troops to replace those who fell.

Gabriel, who had deemed that these frequent attacks were made for the purpose of exhausting the garrison preparatory to a great nocturnal assault, had been anxiously on the watch, but ten o'clock having struck, without any movement on the part of the enemy, he began to feel more at ease. Four days more, and he should have fulfilled his promise to the king.

He now directed his steps to the hospital for the wounded, for he had heard that it was the night for sister Benie to take her turn to watch there. On account of the heat of the night, all the doors were left open, and Gabriel could, from the entrance, look down the great hall where the patients were lying. The spectacle was heart-rending. There were here and there rough couches hastily put up, and covered with blood; but this luxury was only for the officers, and the greater part of the wounded men lay groaning upon mattresses, cloaks, and even straw placed on the floor.

The surgeons, with all their activity, could not attend to all, and Gabriel turned pale with horror at the frightful picture; but suddenly he smiled, for he saw in the midst of the scene, Diana—or rather Sister Benie—pass along, serene, though sad. Never had she looked more beautiful; the diamonds and velvet that she wore at court seemed to suit her less than the nun's dress. He stood gazing at her for a little while, and then Diana came towards the door, as if for a little fresh air.

Gabriel approached her, and said softly, "Diana."

Diana trembled, for it was nearly dark, and she could not see him. "Who spoke?" said she,

"It is I."

"You! M. d'Exmès; is it really you? what do you want of me at this hour, and in this place? If, as they told me, you brought me news of my father, you have been very tardy in delivering it."

"Diana, your cold words cut me to the heart; but I cannot call you 'madam,' as you call me 'monsieur.'"

"Call me neither madam, nor Diana! it is Sister Benie who is before you. Call me sister, and I will call you brother."

"I, call you sister!" cried Gabriel.

"It is the name that every one gives me now. There is nothing so dreadful in it, is there?"

"Oh, yes!—but no; it is a sweet name, and I will accustom myself to it—sister."

"Besides," said Diana, sadly, "if I am not yet a nun by vows, I am one in heart, and only await the permission of the king to become one. Do you bring it to me, Gabriel!"

"Oh!" said Gabriel, reproachfully.

"Mon Dieu!" said Diana, "it is not anger that makes me speak thus—it is grief. I have suffered so much amongst men, that I seek a refuge with God."

"Listen," said Gabriel, "this cruel misunderstanding, which tears both our hearts, must cease. I can no longer bear the thought that you believe me cold and indifferent. But come a little way from here, I pray, lest we should be overheard or interrupted. It is necessary for my reason and tranquillity."

Diana did not hesitate, but placed her hand in his. "Thanks," said he, "time is pressing, for the superior, who knows my love for you, would separate us if she saw us."

"That is the reason, then," said Diana, "why she has prevented me from going out for the last three days, and

would have done so this evening, but that I insisted on coming. Oh! Gabriel, it is not right to deceive this good friend."

"Alas!" said Gabriel, "I wish to speak to you only as a brother. I must control my heart, and though I would die for you, my love must be silent."

"Speak, then, brother."

"Sister," said he, "I have two requests to make to you. You are good and generous, and will grant them to a friend who may never see you again, for a dangerous duty exposes him each hour to death."

"Oh! do not say so," cried Diana.

"I do not speak thus to terrify you, sister, but that you may not refuse me a pardon and a grace.—A pardon for all the grief I have caused you, and the terror with which I inspired you the last time I saw you in Paris; a horrible revelation—received only that day—had thrown me into despair, and almost maddened me. You remember, perhaps, that it was on quitting you that I was attacked by that illness which nearly cost me reason and life."

"Do I remember! Gabriel."

"Do not call me Gabriel, for Heaven's sake. Call me brother; this name, which distressed me at first, I now wish to hear."

"As you please, my brother," said Diana, bewildered.

At this moment, the sound of a body of troops marching, was heard, and Diana exclaimed with fear, "Who comes here? Mon Dieu! they will see us."

"It is a patrol of our men."

"Oh, let me go. They will pass close by, and will recognize me."

"No, it is too late; to fly, now, would be to show yourself. Rather come here with me. And followed by Diana, he hastily mounted a staircase hidden by a stone

balustrade, which led to the ramparts. The patrol passed without seeing them.

"What a badly-protected point," thought Gabriel; then turning to Diana, he said, "Be easy, now they have passed; but you have not yet told me that you have forgiven me."

"One does not forgive fever and despair; one pities and consoles them. But I was never angry with you, I only wept, I was unhappy."

"Now, Diana, for the future, you must trust to my word, and have confidence in me; for the secret which governs my actions does not belong to me. I have sworn to keep it, and if I wish others to keep their engagements with me, I must keep mine with them."

"Explain yourself," said Diana.

"Oh!" said Gabriel, "I hesitate, because I think of that dress you wear—of the name of 'sister,' that I give to you, and I do not wish to pronounce even a word which may awaken memories too delightful—and yet I must tell you that your adored image has never been effaced or weakened in my soul, and that nothing, and no one, ever can weaken it."

"My brother," interrupted Diana, confused and pleased——

"Oh! listen to me to the end, sister. I repeat to you, that nothing can alter the ardent devotion that I feel for you; and, at least, I may always be permitted to love you—only of what nature must that love be? God only knows now, alas! but, perhaps, we shall know one day. Confident in God, and in your brother, you must let me act—hoping nothing, and yet not despairing; we must neither please ourselves with vain dreams, nor yet must we believe that all is over for us in this world. In a short time, I will either come to you, and say, 'Diana, I love you; remember our childhood, and our vows, and

be mine ;' or else I shall say, ' My sister, an invincible obstacle opposes our love, and will not allow us to be happy. Nothing depends upon ourselves ; the obstacle between us is placed by God himself : I give you back your promise—you are free. Give yourself to another, and I shall attach no blame to you ; for dear and sacred as you must ever be to me, our lives can never mingle.' ”

“ What a strange and dreadful enigma ! ” said Diana.

“ This enigma, I shall then, doubtless, be able to explain to you, but, until then, you will vainly seek the key to it. Will you promise me to believe in my love, and to abandon all idea of a convent ? Promise me to have faith and hope.”

“ Yes, faith in you, and hope in God—I can promise. But why should I engage to return to the world, if it be not to walk then by your side ? All would henceforth be darkness for me.”

“ Sister, I ask of you this promise to render me stronger for my work, and that I may find you free for our interview when I ask for it.”

“ Well, my brother, I will obey you.”

“ Oh ! thanks, thanks. Will you give me your hand as a pledge of your promise, sister ? ”

“ Here it is, brother.”

“ Oh ! now I am certain to conquer ! ” cried the ardent young man. “ I feel as if nothing can withstand me now.” But at this moment, as if to give a double contradiction to his words, they heard at the same time voices crying, “ Sister Benie, Sister Benie,” and Gabriel thought he heard a noise from the moat.

“ Oh ! they call me,” said Diana, “ they are seeking me. Mon Dieu ! if they found us together. Adieu, my brother ; adieu, Gabriel.”

“ Au revoir, Diana. Go quickly ; I will remain here.”

Diana ran down and met a troop of people, headed by

La mère Monique, in search of her. Gabriel, reassured by seeing her join them, was about to descend also, when he saw a form behind him. One of the enemy, armed to the teeth, was climbing the wall. To run to this man, and push him backwards, while he cried, "Alarme ! alarme !" in a loud voice, was the work of a moment. It was evidently a nocturnal surprise, and he had been right in his fears. Before a second man had time to mount, Gabriel seized the ladder, still calling loudly for assistance. Another ladder was, however, immediately raised, and the enemy were crowding up it, when Gabriel saw near him a huge stone, which he seized, and, hurling it at the ladder, broke it in two, and precipitated the unfortunate men who were on it into the moat. But Gabriel's cries had been heard, and the soldiers came flocking in. The attack of the Spaniards again failed, and Gabriel had again saved the city.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A GLORIOUS DEFEAT.

For three days after, the enemy were quiet and made no further attempt, but contented themselves with playing their batteries and working their mines incessantly, and by these means the fortifications were gradually giving way, and the ditches were being filled up. On the fourth day, they made another assault. It was the last day promised by Gabriel to the king, so if the enemy were repulsed this time, his father was saved ; if not, both he and Diana were lost, and all Gabriel's former efforts useless. Thus the courage and energy that he displayed it is impossible to describe. He fought as though he was invulnerable ; he was wounded in two places, but without seeming to feel it. He appeared to be everywhere, and

encouraging every one by his example and words. This lasted for six hours, and at seven o'clock the Spaniards beat a retreat. St. Quentin had withstood another day. When the last of the enemy had retired, Gabriel sank exhausted into the arms of those who surrounded him. They carried him home in triumph, and as his wounds were slight, he soon recovered consciousness, and, seeing Coligny standing by him, he said—

“It has been a dreadful assault, admiral, that we have repulsed to-day.”

“Yes, friend; and chiefly thanks to you.”

“And the eight days that the king asked for are passed, thank God!”

“Yes; and I hear that M. de Guise has arrived with the army from Piedmont. St. Quentin, dismantled and ruined, can resist no longer: but her work is done, and France is saved. When the enemy shall have finished with us, and unhappily that cannot be long, they will find plenty behind us to oppose them.”

“Oh, monsieur, you do not know the good that your words do me. But permit me to ask you—and it is not from a feeling of vainglory that I speak, but from a serious and very grave motive—do you think that my presence here has aided to preserve St. Quentin?”

“It has done everything,” replied the admiral, with generous frankness; “the day of your arrival, you know that I was about to give way under my terrible responsibility, and to abandon the place to the Spaniards. The next day you brought into the city a reinforcement which, although small, sufficed to raise the spirit of our troops, and enabled us to resist. I do not allude to your excellent advice to the engineers, nor to the brilliant courage that you have displayed on every occasion; but to-day, with unexampled energy, you prolonged the defense, which, I confess, I had deemed hopeless. I tell you,

Gabriel, with joy, and profound gratitude, that you have saved this city, and consequently France."

"Thanks! admiral, for your kind and generous words, but will you repeat this to his majesty?"

"It is not only my wish, but my duty to do so."

"Oh! what an obligation shall I not be under to you; for the king has in his hands a recompense more wished for by me than all the honors and dignities in the kingdom. Yes, admiral, let him grant me this, and I shall be more than repaid."

"It should, indeed, be a magnificent recompense; I only trust that the king's gratitude will not fail you. However, I will do all you wish."

"Oh!" cried Gabriel, "it is long since I have been so happy as I am at this moment. Now, we will amuse ourselves by holding the city as long as we can; it will always be so much time gained for M. de Guise."

Indeed, the enemy, as before, waited for three days, only employing themselves in destroying the walls and fortifications, and by the 26th of August they were utterly demolished, and the houses were discernible almost as distinctly as in an undefended town. It was impossible to resist longer, and the enemy soon filled the streets of St. Quentin; but the heroic city had held out for seventeen days, twelve of which were after the arrival of Gabriel.

CHAPTER XXX.

ARNOLD DU THILL DOES A LITTLE BUSINESS.

At first, rapine and carnage filled the city, but Philibert Emanuel gave strict orders, and soon put an end to the confusion. Then sending for Coligny, he said to him,—

"I cannot punish bravery, and St. Quentin shall not be more rigorously treated than if she had surrendered at once."

He gave liberal terms. St. Quentin was of course declared a Spanish town, but those of the inhabitants who chose were permitted to leave the place. All were to be free except fifty prisoners to be chosen by himself, in order to obtain their ransoms, so as to pay the arrears due to his troops. Coligny himself he left at liberty to rejoin his uncle, M. de Montmorency, who had not on his part found such generous captors, but who—or rather France for him—had had a large ransom to pay. These conditions were gratefully accepted by Coligny, and with joy mingled with fear by the inhabitants, for they knew not on whom the choice would fall. The next day would show.

Arnold du Thill spent the night thinking over his affairs, and at last hit upon a plan. He dressed himself as richly as he could, and began to walk up and down the streets. Soon he heard a voice behind him cry, "Stop!" with a very perceptible English accent.

"What do you want?"

"I make you my prisoner," replied the man.

"Why so? Why me, more than another?"

"Because you are better dressed than most."

"Oh!" cried Arnold, "by what right do you, a simple archer, arrest me?"

"I do not do it on my own account, but for my master—Lord Grey—to whom the duke has allotted three prisoners for his share—two nobles and a bourgeois—to draw from them what ransoms he can. My master has sent me to seek them, and as you are the richest-looking bourgeois I have seen, I take you."

"It is a great honor for a poor squire, but I hope your master will feed me well."

"Why? Do you think he will have you long?"

"Until it pleases him to set me free."

"Hum," murmured the archer, "can I have mistaken a poor devil for a rich bourgeois?"

"I fear so, monsieur archer; and if Lord Grey has promised you a commission on the prisoners that you bring him, I assure you that you will get nothing out of me. However, you can try."

"You may be right, and I might lose the one per cent which Lord Grey has promised me off the ransoms."

"Well, friend, if I show you a rich prey—a prisoner who would be worth 10,000 francs, for instance, should you be grateful?"

"Ten thousand francs! there are not many prisoners worth so much; that would be 100 francs for me."

"No, you must give fifty to me, if I point him out to you."

"I agree, if you do it at once."

"We shall not have far to go to find him, only a few steps forward. Now, let me hide myself behind the angle of this wall. Do you see at the balcony of that house, a gentleman talking with a bourgeois?"

"Yes; is that my man?"

"It is."

"He is called——"

"The Vicomte d'Exmès."

"Ah! the Vicomte d'Exmès. Is he as rich as he is brave?"

"That he is."

"Do you know him then?"

"Pardieu! I am his squire."

"Ah, Judas!" the archer could not help saying.

"No, for Judas hung himself, and I certainly shall not."

"Perhaps some one may save you the trouble," said the Englishman.

"Tush!" said Arnold. "Does our bargain hold good?"

"Yes; I will take your master to Lord Grey, and afterwards you shall show me a rich bourgeois, if you know one."

"Yes, I know one—at the same price—the half of your commission."

"You shall have it."

"Does your master pay ready money?"

"Yes, and in advance. You shall come with us under the pretext of accompanying your master; I shall get my money, and will give you half, afterwards you shall show me the other."

Then Arnold stepped forward to join his master, asking if he required him. While he was still speaking, the archer came up and said, bowing,—

"Is it to M. le Vicomte d'Exmès, that I have the honor of speaking?"

"I am he; but what do you want with me?"

"Your sword, monsieur."

"To you!" cried Gabriel, with a disdainful gesture.

"In the name of Lord Grey—my master. You are chosen for one of the fifty prisoners."

"Lord Grey might have come himself on this errand, I think, and it is only to him that I will give up my sword."

"As you please, monsieur."

"I suppose he will allow me ransom?"

"Certainly, monsieur."

"Then I follow you."

"But it is shameful," cried Jean Peuquoy. "You are wrong to yield thus, M. le Vicomte. You are not of St. Quentin; you do not belong to the city."

"M. Peuquoy is right," cried Arnold, making a sign to the archer; "and who should know better—he who knows all the city; a bourgeois for the last thirty years, and a

syndic of the corporation? What do you say to that, archer?"

"I have to say," replied the Englishman, who understood him, "that if this be M. Peuquoy, I have orders to take him also."

"I?"

"Yourself, monsieur."

Jean looked at Gabriel. "Alas!" he said, "I fear that the best thing we can do after fulfilling our duty as soldiers, is to accept quietly the conditions of the conqueror. Come then, knave," he continued, turning to the archer, "I am your prisoner, or your master's; and I promise him that he may keep me a long time; for he shall never see the color of my money, and he may feed me to my latest hour."

The archer looked frightened, but seeing that Gabriel and the squire both laughed at this, he took courage again.

Lord Grey was a phlegmatic soldier, for whom war was only a commerce, and who was much out of humor at being paid only by the ransom of three prisoners. He received Gabriel and Jean Peuquoy with cold dignity.

"So it is the Vicomte d'Exmès, whom I have the honor of holding prisoner," said he. "You have given us much trouble, monsieur, and if I demanded for ransom all that you have made Philippe the Second lose, it would be the half of France."

"I have done my best," said Gabriel, simply.

"And it was much. But the chances of war have thrown you and your valiant sword into my hands. Oh! keep it, monsieur," said he, as Gabriel made a movement to give it up, "but to purchase the right of using it again, what will you sacrifice? Let us arrange that; I know that unfortunately, bravery and riches do not always go together. What do you say to 5000 crowns? Is that a reasonable price?"

"No, my lord."

"No; you find that too much? Well, 4000; that is not exorbitant."

"It is not enough, my lord."

"What! Monsieur?"

"You misunderstood me, my lord. You asked me if 5000 crowns was a reasonable price, and I said no, for in my opinion, I am worth double that."

"Very good; and indeed your king may well pay that for you."

"I trust not to be compelled to have recourse to the king."

"So much the better. And when, may I ask, can you pay this?"

"You may imagine that I have not brought such a sum with me, but if you will give me time to send to Paris——"

"Very well, and until then, will it suit you to remain at Calais, of which my brother-in-law, Lord Wentworth, is governor?"

"Yes," replied Gabriel, while a bitter smile passed over his pale face, "and if you will permit me, I will send my squire at once to Paris, that my captivity may be as short as possible."

"Certainly, and while awaiting his return, be assured that you will be treated with every consideration. You will have every possible liberty, and my brother-in-law will entertain you well, for he loves good living and debauchery—a little too well, perhaps. But that is his affair, and his wife—my sister—is dead."

Gabriel bowed.

"Now for you, monsieur," said Lord Grey to Jean Peuquoy; "you are, I believe, the bourgeois who has been assigned to me."

"I am Jean Peuquoy, my lord."

"Well, Jean Peuquoy, what are you worth?"

"Not ten crowns, monsieur."

"Nonsense! one hundred at least."

"Well, then, one hundred, since you value me so highly; but you do not want ready money, I hope?"

"What, have you not even this miserable sum at your disposal?"

"I had it, monsieur, but I have given it all to the poor during the siege."

"You have at least relations—friends?"

"One must not count too much upon friends; and as for relations, I have neither wife nor children; I have but a cousin who will doubtless advance me this sum, but he lives at Calais, where he has been an armorer for more than thirty years."

"Well, then, we will all go to-morrow to Calais. Till then, you are free to go where you please on your parol."

"What are your intentions?" said Gabriel to Jean, on leaving. "Is it possible that you have not one hundred crowns with which to buy your liberty at once, or do you wish to go to Calais?"

"Hush! In this Spanish atmosphere I am almost afraid to hazard a word. You can trust your squire, I think?"

"Certainly; he is the most faithful fellow in the world."

"Well, then, take him with us to Calais, instead of sending him direct to Paris. We cannot have too many eyes."

"But for what reason? Have you any relations in Calais?"

"Oh, yes; my cousin Pierre Peuquoy. He is a true Frenchman although he lives in an English town, and would willingly aid us, if by chance you ever found such an heroic project there as you have here."

"Noble friend, I understand you; but you rate me

highly. You do not know how much selfishness was in my heroism, and that for the future, one sacred duty claims me before all others."

"Well, fulfil it; but perhaps when you are at Calais, you may find it also a duty to take your revenge for St. Quentin."

CHAPTER XXXI.

END OF THE HONORABLE NEGOTIATIONS OF ARNOLD DU THILL.

ARNOLD remained behind, instead of following his master. The archer went to Lord Grey, and asked for his promised money, which, as he was well satisfied, was immediately given to him. He brought Arnold his share, and then said,—“Now will you help me to choose another from among the men, women, or children, of noble race in this city?”

“What! are women included?”

“Oh, yes! If you can find me one, young and pretty, that would do well. Lord Grey would sell her to his brother-in-law, Lord Wentworth, who likes female prisoners.”

“Unluckily, I do not know one. Ah, yes—but it is impossible!”

“Why impossible? no one is exempt.”

“No; but she of whom I speak, must not be brought near to my master; and if they were both in the governor’s house at Calais ——”

“But Lord Wentworth would keep her to himself you may be sure.”

“Her father would pay well for her.”

“What is her father—a duke?”

"A king."

"The daughter of a king here?"

"Yes; and a queen of beauty."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, tell me her name!"

"On the same conditions—half of the money."

"Oh, yes."

"Well, it is Diana de Castro, commonly called here Sister Benie."

"Where shall I find her?"

"At the convent of the Benedictines."

"I will run there," cried the archer, disappearing.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LORD WENTWORTH.

THREE days afterwards, Lord Wentworth, governor of Calais, after having taken his instructions from Lord Grey, and seen him embark for England, remounted his horse and rode back to his house, where Gabriel, Jean Pequoy, and Diana were detained prisoners; the latter, however, being unaware that her lover was so near her.

Lord Wentworth was a handsome man, and, although a few gray hairs were beginning to mingle with his dark curls, still young-looking. He received his prisoners cordially.

"You are welcome to my house, M. d'Exmès," he said, "and I am much obliged to my brother-in-law for sending you here. Pardon me; but in this dull place society like yours is so rare, that I cannot but hope that your ransom will be long in coming."

"Longer than I thought, my lord; for my squire, whom I was about to send to fetch it, got into a quarrel on the way here with one of the escort, and has received a wound

on his head, which will detain him in Calais longer than—I confess—I wished.”

“So much the worse for him, but the better for me.”

“You are too kind,” said Gabriel, with a sad smile.

“The greatest kindness would be, no doubt, to send you to Paris on your parol, but Lord Grey made me promise to keep you till I had the money. You are free, however, to go where you please in Calais, if you will give me your word not to attempt to escape. Even if you prefer it, I think that you will be more at your ease elsewhere than here, you are at liberty to lodge where you like.”

“Oh, M. le Vicomte,” cried Jean Peuquoy, “if you would deign to accept a room at my cousin’s, you would render us both proud and happy, I assure you.”

“Thanks, my friend: but I fear that to use Lord Wentworth’s kind permission would be to abuse it.”

“No; I assure you,” replied Lord Wentworth, “you are perfectly free to accept M. Peuquoy’s invitation. Pierre Peuquoy is a rich fellow; I know him well, and have often bought armor from him. He has a pretty sister, too, and I recommend you to go there.”

Gabriel began to think, and rightly, that Lord Wentworth, for some reason, would prefer his absence, so he accepted Jean’s invitation.

“I believe,” continued Lord Wentworth, turning to Jean, “that it is from your cousin that your ransom is to come?”

“Yes, my lord; all that Pierre possesses belongs to Jean—it is always so between us. I was so sure of his hospitality, that I have already sent M. d’Exmès’ wounded squire there; and I am so sure of his purse, that if you will send a servant with me, I promise you that he shall bring back the money.”

“It is useless, M. Peuquoy. To-morrow I will come

and choose instead, one of those beautiful suits of armor which your cousin makes so well. And now, M. d'Exmès, I have only to add, how welcome you will be whenever you please to pay me a visit, which, perhaps, you will better appreciate, when you have experienced a little of the dulness of Calais."

When they were gone, Lord Wentworth summoned one of his servants.

"Jane," said he, "have you attended, as I ordered you, to the young lady?"

"Yes, my lord."

"How does she seem?"

"Sad, monsieur; but she is quite calm, and speaks gently, but firmly."

"Has she dined?"

"She would take nothing, my lord."

"Well, go to her, and say that Lord Wentworth, to whom Lord Grey has assigned his rights over her, begs her to receive him."

In a few minutes Jane returned, saying that the lady was ready to see him.

"Go up then, and say that I am coming." And Lord Wentworth followed with a beating heart; for though he had seen Diana but once, her beauty had made a deep impression on him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A JAILER IN LOVE.

DIANA received Lord Wentworth with dignity, hiding all the inquietude which she could not but feel, under a calm exterior.

"You are Lord Wentworth, governor of Calais, I believe," she said, as he entered.

"Yes, I am Lord Wentworth, your devoted servant, and I await your commands."

"My commands! You mock me. If they had listened—not to my commands, but to my prayers—I should not be here. You know who I am, my lord?"

"I know that you are Madame de Castro, the cherished daughter of Henry the Second."

"Why, then, am I a prisoner?"

"Precisely because you are the daughter of the king, and they thought your ransom would be a large one."

"But how did they know that I was at the convent? Only the superior and one other person knew my secret."

"That person must have betrayed you."

"Oh, no! I am sure not," cried Diana, with so much warmth, that Lord Wentworth felt jealous without knowing why. "Why," continued she, "was I made prisoner in this way? Three soldiers sent to arrest a woman—all my prayers to be taken to Admiral Coligny, or even to see Lord Grey, refused—and only told that I was his prisoner, and must go to Calais, until the payment of my ransom. Why also, was I kept from all those who might have acquainted the king with my captivity, who would have sent my ransom at once? What are Lord Grey's intentions with regard to me?"

"Madam, his only object was to draw from you the largest sum of money possible. At first I laughingly reproved my greedy brother-in-law; but I saw you—and saw that if you were a king's daughter by birth, you were a queen by beauty. Then, I confess with shame, that I changed my advice to him, and represented that in the present state of war between England and France, the possession of you was important; that you might even, perhaps, at some time, be worth a city for your ransom; and I advised him not to part with so rich a prize for a few francs."

"Oh! monsieur, how cruel! Why do you oppose my deliverance? You saw me but for a few minutes—why should you hate me?"

"Madam, I saw you but for a few minutes, and I loved you."

Diana recoiled in terror.

"Do not fear me, madam," said Lord Wentworth, "I am a gentleman, and it is I, and not you, who have reason to tremble. I love you; and I could not help telling you so. Yes! when I saw you pass, looking like an angel, all my heart flew towards you. True, you are in my power here, but, alas! I am still more in yours; and of the two the true prisoner is not you—you are the queen, madam; order, and I will obey."

"Then, monseigneur, send me to Paris, from whence I will immediately forward whatever ransom you may fix."

"Anything but that, madam; such a sacrifice is beyond my strength when I tell you that a glance from you has chained my heart forever. Here, in this exile, I have never had before a worthy object of love; I have loved you but for two hours, it is true, but if you knew me you would know that it is as if I had loved you all my life."

"But, mon Dieu! my lord, what do you hope or expect?"

"To see you, madam—to enjoy your presence. My blessed right is to keep you here, and I will use it."

"And you believe, my lord, that this violence will win my love?"

"No, madam, but perhaps seeing me each day so sad—so respectful—you will be touched at last."

"And then——"

"Then, madam, Lord Wentworth, the head of one of the richest and most noble families in England, will lay at the feet of Madame de Castro his name and his life."

"Is he ambitious?" thought Diana; and then said, "Listen, my lord; give me my freedom, I counsel you, and you shall be satisfied. When peace comes, as come it must, I will obtain for you, besides my ransom, more honors and dignities than you would ever have as my husband. Be generous, and I will be grateful."

"Madam, I divine your thoughts, but I am at once more disinterested and more ambitious than you think. Of all the treasures in the world I wish but for you."

"Then, my lord," said Diana, blushing, but proud, "one last word—I love another."

"And do you imagine that I will resign you quietly to a rival? No, he shall be as unhappy as myself, more so, for he will not see you. Three events only can henceforth free you. My death, but I am young; peace, but I trust that that is far off; or the taking of Calais; but Calais is impregnable. You are wholly mine, for I have bought of Lord Grey his rights over you, and you will see what a sure and devoted jailer is a man who loves." So saying, Lord Wentworth bowed and went away, leaving Diana trembling and despairing.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHERE VARIOUS SUBJECTS ARE COLLECTED WITH MUCH
SKILL.

THREE weeks had passed, and no important change had taken place in the fortunes of the different personages of our history. Jean Peuquoy had, of course, paid his ransom, and had obtained permission to set up in business at Calais. He did not, however, seem in a hurry to begin, but passed his days in wandering about the ramparts and talking to the soldiers.

Gabriel became daily more sad. He had heard only general news from Paris. France was beginning to recover, and the Spaniards were checked. These events to the accomplishment of which he had so largely contributed, rejoiced him certainly, but the thought of his father and of Diana clouded his brow, and prevented him from meeting, as he would have done at any other time, the friendly advances of the governor, who seemed to have taken a violent fancy to him. He made him dine with him three times a week, and come to see him on the alternate days. It was a troublesome affection, for he often declared that he would keep him as long as he could, and not let him go until he had received the last farthing of his ransom. As, after all, this might only be a gentlemanly way of expressing distrust, Gabriel did not dare to remonstrate, and he waited impatiently for the recovery of his squire, but he seemed to get on slowly, notwithstanding that after two or three days the surgeon had declared his task ended, and that a few days' care was all that was necessary. Gabriel at length decided that his squire should set off in two days, but when this time arrived, Arnold declared himself so be so giddy and weak as to be unable to stand without support. Gabriel, therefore, granted him two more days, but then Babette Peuquoy, who had been nursing Arnold, declared to Gabriel, with tears in her eyes, that she was sure, that if he forced his squire to go he would die from weakness on the road. This went on for some time, but at last Gabriel grew angry and impatient, and Arnold himself declared that he was ready to start, and said to Babette that he had better go at once that he might return the sooner; but poor Babette's red eyes and sorrowful looks showed that she was not well pleased.

The night before Arnold was to leave, Gabriel went as usual to dine with Lord Wentworth. As he was leaving, a

woman approached him, and, with her finger on her lips, pushed a paper into his hand. Gabriel, much surprised, and seeing no one near, stepped back into the hall, and by the light of the lamp read, with some emotion, the following words,—

“MONSIEUR,—I do not know you ; I have never seen you, but one of my women tells me that you are French, and a prisoner like myself, and this gives me courage to cry to you in my distress. You are, doubtless, received to ransom and will return to Paris ; you may see my friends, who are ignorant of what has become of me. You can tell them where I am, that Lord Wentworth keeps me here, and allows me to communicate with no one—will accept of no ransom—and, abusing his position, speaks to me of a love which fills me with horror, but which seems to increase, and may drive him to any extremity. A gentleman and a countryman will certainly help me in this miserable position. Now I will tell you who I am——” but here the letter broke off abruptly, doubtless from the writer having been interrupted and having thought it better to send it as it was than not at all.

Gabriel, much moved, was still standing there, when Lord Wentworth himself suddenly appeared.

“You here again, Gabriel,” said he, “what has brought you back? Nothing wrong, I hope?”

Gabriel’s only answer was to hand to him the letter that he had just received.

Lord Wentworth glanced at it, and grew deadly pale, but as he read, he concocted his answer.

“The old fool,” said he.

Nothing could be better calculated to disarm Gabriel’s suspicions and abate his interest ; however, he said, “But who is this prisoner whom you keep here against her will, my lord?”

"Against her will! I should think so. She is a relation of my wife's—quite mad, and whom they have, most inconveniently for me, entrusted to my charge. As you have penetrated this family secret you may as well know all about it. The mania of Lady Howe, whose head is turned by novels and romances, is to think herself an oppressed heroine, in spite of her fifty years and her gray hairs, and to wish to interest in her cause every young man that she hears of."

"It is a strange story," answered Gabriel, somewhat coldly; "why does she call herself French?"

"Oh! to interest you, I suppose," said Lord Wentworth, with a forced smile.

"But this love, with which she says that you persecute her——"

"Illusions of madness, I suppose," answered Lord Wentworth, impatiently.

"You keep her very closely concealed, my lord."

"I did not know that you were so curious, Gabriel; but it is a quarter to nine, and I advise you to go home before the curfew sounds. If Lady Howe interests you so much, you can hear more of her to-morrow."

Gabriel returned home, but he could not quite shake off the doubts which were awakened by the letter. He resolved, however, to say no more on the subject to Lord Wentworth, but to watch and find out more about it himself. The next morning Arnold set out, not without many injunctions from Gabriel to procure the money for his ransom, and return as quickly as possible. It was difficult to say whether Gabriel or Babette wished most anxiously for his return, but they were both destined to wait for a long time.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOW ARNOLD DU THILL HANGS ARNOLD DU THILL AT
NOYON.

ARNOLD met several bodies of men on his way, and was frequently stopped, but his safe conduct from Lord Wentworth always sufficed to enable him to proceed unmolested. Still these interruptions delayed and annoyed him so much, that, on the second day, he determined to avoid the towns, and only to rest in the smallest hamlets. But to do this he was obliged to leave the high-road, and as he was journeying onwards he saw a man, who, on his approach, disappeared into a ditch.

Arnold at first passed him rapidly, fearing he was a robber, but seeing that he did not stir, he became curious and returned to the ditch. The man then suddenly darted up, and seizing him by one leg, threw him off his horse, and placing his knee on his breast, asked him who he was.

"Let me go, I beg. I am French, but I have a pass from Lord Wentworth, the governor of Calais."

"If you are French—and in truth you have not the accent of those demons—I do not want even to see your pass. But what made you approach me with so much curiosity?"

"I saw you in the ditch, and advanced to see if you were in want of assistance."

"Thanks for your good intentions," said the other, "I have behaved rather roughly to you, it is true; but my affairs are in a bad state at present, and that is my excuse. But you are a countryman and will help me—I am called Martin Guerre—what is your name?"

"I—I am called Bertrand," cried Arnold, trembling to find himself alone with this man whom he had injured so much. Fortunately for him, the darkness of the night insured his incognito, and he disguised his voice.

"Well then, Bertrand," continued Martin, "know that I have been a prisoner among the Spaniards and Flemings, from whom I have escaped to-day, for the second time. I have been for the last month their butt—exposed to all sorts of insults, and to continued reproaches which they cast in my teeth about some girl whom they called Gudule, and whom they declared I had carried off. One fine day, however, I ran off, but they retook me and gave me a good beating, and threatened to hang me if I did it again. But in spite of their threats I again escaped at Noyon, and climbed into a tree, to wait for night. They have sought me, I know, for they passed under the very tree in which I was concealed. When it was getting dark I came down, and then I lost myself in the wood, and I am now dying from hunger, for I have not tasted food for twenty-four hours."

"You did not appear very weak just now," replied Arnold.

"You will assist me to find my way—will you not?"

Arnold reflected a moment; for he did not desire, either to be recognized by Martin, or that he should arrive at Paris at the same time as himself, and so discover his treachery. Then he said—"I will show you the road; I am returning myself from Amray, which is the next village on the road to Paris, and if you will come with me for a few leagues, I will show you a more direct road than this to Amray, and then you cannot mistake your way."

"Thanks; but cannot you also give me something to eat, for I am faint with hunger?"

"Alas! I have not a crumb; but if you would like to drink, I have a bottle full."

"Oh, yes; a little wine will give me strength."

"Well then, drink, my good man," said Arnold, handing him his bottle.

Martin took a good draught; and with his empty stomach, he felt almost immediately the exhilarating effect. "Ah!" said he, "your claret is strong."

"Not at all; it is very mild. I can drink two bottles of it with ease. But let us sit down for a few minutes, and rest, and then I will show you the way. Where were you made prisoner?"

"The enemy declare that it was at the battle of St. Laurent; but I believe that it was later, and that I was alone when I fell into their hands."

"How extraordinary! Take another draught, and then tell me more about yourself—it must be interesting. Are you from Picardy?"

"No," replied Martin, after another pull at the bottle, "I am from Artignes."

"A fine country. Have you a family there?"

"Yes, a wife and children." And Martin, led on by Arnold, and excited by the wine, recounted all his history—his youth—his courtship, and how his wife was charming, but had one little defect—that of being too ready to use her hands, and "although" as he said "a blow from a woman does not dishonor a man, it becomes tiresome at least."

After talking thus for some time, Martin, who had made a third attack upon the bottle, tried to rise, but found that he staggered, and fell back again. "Oh!" he cried, with a loud laugh, "what is the matter? it surely cannot be that wine. Help me up, comrade," and he began to sing loudly.

"Hush!" said Arnold, "you will bring the enemy upon us."

"Devil take the enemy—I defy them now!"

"But do you not wish to sleep at Amray? Stay—I will lead my horse by the bridle, and give you my other arm, and conduct you myself to Amray, or else I am sure that you would not find the way."

"Ma foi, I accept your offer, and thank you; for, between ourselves, I fear that I am a little drunk."

Arnold, then taking him by the arm, led him to the postern-gate of Noyon. "Now," said he, "you need go no further. Knock at the door, and mention my name to the man who opens, and he will show you my brother's house. He will receive you, and give you a bed, if you say that I sent you."

"Adieu, and thanks," replied Martin. "I am only a poor devil, who cannot repay you as you deserve, but God will, I am sure."

For a moment this prediction frightened Arnold, who felt half inclined to recall his victim; but he was already knocking vigorously at the door.

"Who is there?" asked the sentinel.

"Arnold du Thill—Martin Guerre, I mean."

"Arnold du Thill! Here, comrades," cried the sentinel, and the real Arnold, hidden behind a tree, heard several voices exclaim, "Is it really he?"

Poor Martin Guerre, on recognizing his persecutors, uttered a cry of despair, which struck the heart even of Arnold. Then was heard a scuffle, mingled with oaths, but the noise gradually diminished, when Arnold laid down to sleep under a tree.

He awoke about four o'clock in the morning, and was cautiously taking his way back to the road where he had met Martin the evening before, when he saw, just outside the town, a gibbet, on which was a man hanging, whom he recognized as poor Martin. With a hideous smile he advanced, and cut the cord with his sabre, and, after taking a ring off the finger of the dead man, he searched his

pockets, where he found various letters and papers, which he appropriated.

Half-an-hour afterwards a wood-cutter who was passing along, saw the cord dangling from the gibbet, and the body on the ground, and approached towards it. As he did so, the body moved its head and then its hands, and finally raised itself on its knees, when the man fled in terror.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE DREAMS OF ARNOLD DU THILL.

The Constable de Montmorency—arrived only the day before—presented himself at the Louvre. But Henry the Second received him coldly, and began to praise the measures which had been adopted by the Duc de Guise, and which he said had been the means of saving the kingdom. Pale with anger, the constable flew for consolation to Diana de Poitiers, but here also he found that absence and failure had diminished his popularity, and he met with a frigid reception. Returning to his house, he stamped with rage, exclaiming, “Kings and women are an ungrateful race, and love only success.”

“Monseigneur,” said a valet, “here is a man who wishes to speak to you.”

“Let him go to the devil.”

“He desired me to say, monsieur, that he was called Arnold du Thill.”

“Arnold! Oh, you may admit him. I thought you were a prisoner,” said Montmorency, as he entered.

“I was so, monseigneur, like yourself.”

“How did you escape?”

“I made use of *my* money—cunning. But as that is all the money I have, I am lamentably in want of some.”

"What! asking already?"

"It is a debt, as monseigneur will see, if he will deign to look over this paper."

The constable read it, and said, "Some of these things are absurd, and others might have been useful to me in the position in which I formerly stood, but are certainly not so now."

"Monseigneur exaggerates his disgrace."

"Disgrace! Well, since you always know everything, you know, I suppose, that the king will not now give his daughter to my son?"

"I think that the king would willingly do so if you would restore her to him."

"What do you mean?"

"Have you not heard that she has been missing ever since the taking of St. Quentin?"

"No, I have not; I only arrived last night."

"Well, monseigneur, do you not think that you would regain the favor of the king, if you went to him and said, 'Sire, you weep for your daughter; you seek her everywhere. I alone know where she is.'"

"Do you know, Arnold?"

"To know is my trade. I have news to sell, and you see that it is worth buying. Reflect, monsieur."

"I do reflect, and I know that kings remember the defects of those who serve them, and not their successes. I should restore his daughter to the king—at first he would be delighted, and all the gold and all the honors in the world would not suffice to pay me. But then Diana would weep, and declare that she would die if they gave her to any one but the Vicomte d'Exmès, and the king would yield, and remember only the battle I have lost, and not the child I have restored. Thus all my efforts would only tend to render the Vicomte d'Exmès happy."

"Then at the same time that Madame de Castro reappears, M. d'Exmès must disappear."

"Yes, but I do not like such extreme measures."

"Ah, monseigneur mistakes my intentions. I never thought of violence. Come, I will show you the lost lady, and will ensure the absence of your rival during a sufficient time to get the marriage over with your son. On your part, what will you do for me?"

"What do you want?"

"First, the payment of the account which I have had the honor to present to you."

"So be it."

"Ah! I thought we should have no difficulty there. But money is not all."

"What do you say?"

"Monsieur, I am no longer the Arnold du Thill whom you have known, restless and covetous, but intend now to pass the rest of my days peaceably in my native place, with a modest fortune, in the bosom of my family."

"Your family—I never knew you had one."

"Oh, monsieur, Arnold du Thill is not my real name; I am actually Martin Guerre, and was born in the village of Artignes, near Mieux, where I have left my wife and children."

"Your wife and children!" cried Montmorency, astonished.

"Yes, monseigneur; and I must tell you that these two services will be my last, and that thenceforward I shall retire from business and live quietly, surrounded by the esteem of my friends and the affection of my family."

"Marvelous! But if you have become so domestic, what price do you ask for your secret?"

"Why, monsieur, I have prepared a paper, attesting that I, Martin Guerre, have been in your service for so many years, and have always proved myself a faithful

squire; in consideration of which you have presented me with a sum of money sufficient to render me comfortable for the rest of my days; and to this I wish you to append your name and seal."

"Impossible; I should deserve to be called a villain, if I signed such falsehoods."

"No, monsieur, they are not falsehoods. I have served you faithfully. Besides, it is only a mutual exchange of benefits, and you may be sure that no one will ever appear to give you the lie. Sign, monsieur."

"No; I must first know where Madame de Castro and M. d'Exmès are."

"I will tell you, monsieur, and I think that you will allow that chance and I have both worked for you. Madame de Castro was simply taken captive at St. Quentin as one of the fifty prisoners; but why those who hold her keep her secret, and why she has not communicated with her friends, I know not. Possibly her messengers, owing to these troubled times, have been taken, or perhaps some other mystery is behind; but I can positively say where she is, and in whose hands."

"That is valuable news, certainly; and where is she?"

"Wait, monsieur! first hear something of the Vicomte d'Exmès."

"Well, where is he?"

"A prisoner also; it is fashionable just now."

"But he will soon be free; he will send for his ransom, and we may have him here any day."

"Exactly so, monsieur; he has sent for his ransom."

"Well, then, what can we do?"

"Luckily, monsieur, it is I, who have been serving him under my true name of Martin Guerre, whom he has sent for the money."

"You have not been for the money, then?"

"Certainly I have, monsieur; one does not neglect such

things. But be easy—he shall not have it. It is just these 10,000 crowns, which will enable me to live comfortably for the rest of my life, and for which, according to this paper, I shall be supposed to be indebted to your generosity.”

“But I will not sign it,” cried Montmorency; “I will not be the accomplice of a thief.”

“Well then, send him this money, and he will return as soon as Madame de Castro.”

“And if we do not send it?”

“We shall gain time. He will most probably wait for me a fortnight quietly, then another week impatiently, and another in despair. Perhaps he may then send a second messenger to seek the first, the first will not be found, and it will doubtless take some time to collect another 10,000 crowns. You will have time to marry your son twice over, for the vicomte will not reappear for two months at least. He will only return next year, furious and disappointed.”

“Yes, but when he does return, will he not seek for his squire?”

“Alas! monsieur, I regret to tell you that poor Martin, in returning to his master, with the ransom in his possession, unfortunately fell into the hands of the Spaniards, who, after robbing him, hung him at Noyon.”

“How! Arnold? You will certainly be hung.”

“I have been so already, monsieur: see how far my zeal goes. Perhaps the dates may not quite agree, but who can trust the word of those wretched Spaniards? You see, monsieur, that my precautions have been well taken, and that you can never be compromised. Shall I give you a receipt, monsieur?” continued he, impudently; and he placed the paper before the constable.

“But, first the name of the town, and of the man who holds Diana prisoner.”

"Name for name, monsieur: sign this first." Montmorency did so.

"Your seal, monsieur?"

"Here it is; now, where is Diana?"

"In the hands of Lord Wentworth, at Calais."

"And the Vicomte d'Exmès?"

"In the same place."

"But then they see each other?"

"No, monsieur; he knows not that his lady-love is so near him. He lives in the town, and she in the governor's house."

"I will go to the Louvre," cried the constable.

"And I, to Artignes," said Arnold.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE FEARS OF BABETTE PEUQUOY.

To the great regret of Diana and the Vicomte d'Exmès, nearly a month passed without bringing any change in their situation. Pierre Peuquoy made armor, Jean had recommenced weaving, and Babette wept. As for Gabriel, he had done as Arnold had predicted, and had waited patiently for the first fortnight, and impatiently for the next. He went but rarely now to Lord Wentworth's, who had been cool to him, ever since he had so rashly entered into his private affairs.

Lord Wentworth himself became daily more sad. It was not, however, the three messages sent by the king at short intervals which disquieted him. All three—the first with politeness—the second with bitterness—and the third with menaces, demanded of course the same thing—the liberty of Madame de Castro on the payment of a ransom, the amount of which was left to Lord Wentworth. To all these he had given the same reply, that

he would keep Madame de Castro as a hostage, to exchange her, perhaps, at some future time, for some important prisoner, or else keep her until peace was concluded.

He was only doing what he had a strict right to do, and he defied Henry the Second behind the thick walls of Calais. It was not then the anger of the king that troubled him, although he was much puzzled to find out how he had heard that he held her captive. What troubled him was the continued contempt and dislike of Diana herself. Neither submission nor attentions had been able to soften her proud and disdainful spirit. She always remained sad, calm, and dignified before the passionate governor, and if he spoke a word of love—always, we must say, remaining faithful to his character of a gentleman—a look, at once wretched and haughty, pierced his heart and offended his pride.

He had not dared to speak to her of the letter she had written to Gabriel, nor of the messages from the king, so much did he fear a bitter word or a reproach from that charming mouth. But Diana, seeing no longer the waiting maid who had assisted her, understood that this last chance had failed her. On the last day of October Gabriel determined to go to Lord Wentworth, and ask him for another messenger to send to Paris for his ransom.

Lord Wentworth was engaged when he called, and begged that Gabriel would wait for a few minutes. While he waited he approached the window of the room to look out, when some writing with a diamond on the glass attracted his attention. Looking more closely at it, he distinctly read, "Diana de Castro." A cloud passed over his eyes, and he was obliged to lean against the wall for support. Was this, then, the signature that was wanting to the letter? Was it Diana, his own Diana, whom Lord Wentworth held in his power, and dared to persecute with his love? As these thoughts passed

through his mind, Lord Wentworth entered. Gabriel, without saying a word, pointed to the writing on the window.

Lord Wentworth turned very pale—then recovering himself, said quietly, “Well, and what then?”

“Is not that the name of the mad relation whom you keep here?”

“It is possible,” answered Lord Wentworth, haughtily.

“If so, sir, I know this lady, and am devoted to her, as every French gentleman should be to a daughter of the house of France.”

“Well, monsieur?”

“I shall demand the reason why you detain a lady of such high rank.”

“And if I refuse to answer you, monsieur, as I have already refused the King of France?”

“The King of France!”

“Yes, monsieur; an Englishman is not, it seems to me, accountable to the king of another country for his actions, especially when there is war between the two countries. Thus, M. d’ Exmès, if I also refuse to answer you——”

“I should demand satisfaction, my lord.”

“And you hope to kill me, doubtless, with that sword which you only wear, thanks to my kindness, and which I may demand at any time.”

“Oh! my lord,” cried Gabriel, furiously, “you shall pay for this.”

“It is annoying to you, no doubt, to have your hands tied, but confess that it would not do for a prisoner of war, and a debtor, to regain his liberty, and pay his debts, by cutting his creditor’s throat.”

“My lord,” said Gabriel, trying to speak calmly, “you are aware that I sent my squire to Paris, a month ago, for my ransom. Something must have happened to him—he has, perhaps, been robbed and murdered on the road. At

all events he has not returned, and I came to-day to ask leave to send some one else to procure my ransom. Now, my lord, you cannot refuse me this permission, or else I shall say that you fear my being at liberty—that you fear my sword.”

“And to whom will you say that, in an English town, under my immediate authority?”

“To every man who speaks or thinks—to every officer—to every workman——”

“You seem to forget, monsieur, that I have but to say the word, and you would be thrown into prison, where you could accuse me only to the walls.”

“Oh! it is true!” cried Gabriel in anguish. “Dear Diana, I can do nothing for you in your need.”

“What did you say, sir?” cried Lord Wentworth, “did I hear right—do you also love Madame de Castro?”

“Yes, I love her, and my love is as pure and devoted, as yours is unworthy and cruel. Yes! I love her—I idolize her.”

“Ah! you love her, and she loves you, no doubt. It is you whose remembrance she invokes when she wishes to torture me. It is for you that she despises and rejects me.”

“Oh! does she really love me thus?” cried Gabriel, “and thinks of me—calls for me. Oh, my lord, in spite of you and all the world, I will save and protect her. Do what you please with me, for with her love as a shield, I am sure to conquer you.”

“It is true—I believe it,” murmured Lord Wentworth. Then, after a pause, he said, “You came to ask for a second messenger to Paris?”

“Such was the object of my visit, my lord.”

“And you reproach me, doubtless, that I have not had sufficient faith in your word as a gentleman to allow you to go to Paris yourself for your ransom?”

"It is true, my lord."

"Well, monsieur, from this day you are free—the gates of Calais are open to you."

"I understand you, monsieur—you wish to send me away from her. But suppose I now refuse to go?"

"I am master here, monsieur, and you have no choice as to accepting or refusing."

"Then I will go, my lord, but I cannot now feel grateful for the permission."

"I have no need of your gratitude, monsieur," said Lord Wentworth, coldly.

"I will go, my lord, but I will not long remain your debtor; I shall soon return, my lord, with my ransom, and as I shall then be neither your prisoner nor your debtor, you can no longer refuse to fight me."

"I ought to refuse it, monsieur," said Lord Wentworth with melancholy, "for our situations are unequal. If I kill you, she will hate me; but if you kill me, she will only love you the more. But I accept your challenge, nevertheless. It is now three o'clock, and you have until seven, when they close the gates, to get ready for your departure: I will give orders that you shall be allowed to depart."

"Very well, my lord, at seven o'clock I shall be no longer in Calais."

"And you shall never re-enter it; even if I am killed by you in a duel outside the walls, my precautions will have been taken to ensure your never seeing her again, which will be effectual if the words of a governor and a dying man have any weight."

"It is impossible, my lord! I must see her again."

"How will you manage it?"

After an instant's thought, Gabriel replied, "I will take Calais, my lord." Then bowing, he went out, leaving Lord Wentworth petrified with astonishment, and hardly knowing whether to laugh or not at the threat.

Gabriel returned to Jean Peuquoy, and told him all that had passed. When he came out of his room an hour afterwards, having finished his packing, he found Babette outside the door.

"You are sure that you will return, monsieur?" said she.

"I swear it."

"With your squire, Martin Guerre, I suppose?"

"I trust so."

"You are sure to find him at Paris. He is not a bad man, and would not think of making away with your ransom. He is incapable of such treachery, is he not?"

"I will answer for him, although he has been much changed of late."

"And he is also incapable of deceiving a woman?"

"Oh, that I would not answer for so certainly."

"Well, monsieur," said poor Babette, turning pale; "will you give him this ring; he will know what it means, and from whom it comes."

"I will give it to him, Babette," said Gabriel, surprised, "but the person who sends it knows, I suppose, that he is a married man."

"Married! Oh then, monsieur, do not give it to him—break it—throw it away."

"But, Babette——"

"Adieu, monsieur," cried the poor girl, who rushed into her own room, where she sank fainting on a chair.

Gabriel, unquiet and distressed, went down-stairs, where he found Jean waiting for him.

"M. le Vicomte," said he, "you once asked me why I wove such long cords, and I wish now to tell you. By joining two of such long cords, I can make an immense ladder, which Pierre and I, who belong to the City Guard, could transport piece by piece to the Octagon tower. Then some dark morning in December or January, when

I am sentinel, I could fasten it to the iron spikes on the battlement, and let the other end fall into the sea, where some bold boat's crew might chance to find it."

"But, my brave Jean——"

"Enough for the present, M. d'Exmès; but I wish before you go to give you a souvenir. It is a plan of the walls and fortifications of Calais, which I have made from observations taken during those long walks round them, which you used to laugh at so much. Adieu, M. d'Exmès."

At the door Pierre was standing. "Thanks for your hospitality, monsieur," said Gabriel to him; "I will send or bring the money that you have advanced to me. Meanwhile, pray present this diamond ring to your sister."

"I accept it, M. le Vicomte, on condition that you will accept something from me. This horn, which I have made myself, and whose tone I should recognize through the roaring of the sea; for instance, on the 5th of each month, when I mount guard from four to six o'clock on the Octagon tower, which overhangs the sea."

"Thanks!" said Gabriel, pressing his hand to show him that he was understood.

"I have plenty of arms," continued Pierre, "so that in case of an assault, the French party in the city could all be armed, and would be very formidable."

"That is true," said Gabriel, again pressing the hand of the brave citizen.

"Adieu, monsieur; or rather, au revoir."

"Soon, I hope," answered Gabriel, as he mounted his horse.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE END OF THE TRIBULATIONS OF MARTIN GUERRE.

GABRIEL's journey to Paris took him four days, for the roads were bad, and he had to make many détours to avoid falling in with the enemy. His thoughts were incessantly occupied with the captivity of his father and Diana, and by the promise of the king, and the part that he should take if Henri did not fulfil it; "though surely," he thought, "the first gentleman in Europe cannot break his word."

When he arrived at his own house, whence he had been so long absent, it was very early in the morning, but he found Aloyse already stirring, and was soon in the arms of his faithful nurse.

"Ah! here you are at last, monsieur!—here you are, my child," cried she.

"Is there any news from the court, Aloyse?"

"None, monsieur."

"Oh! of course," cried the young man bitterly; "I was a prisoner—perhaps dead; one does not pay one's debts to a prisoner, still less to a dead man. But when they see me alive and free, they must keep their word."

"I trust so, monsieur."

"Is Admiral Coligny in Paris?"

"Yes, he has sent a dozen times to ask if you had returned. As for Madame de Castro, who was lost so long, M. de Montmorency has discovered that she is a prisoner at Calais, and hopes soon to be able to obtain her release."

"I know it, and hope it also. But you do not speak to me of Martin Guerre, who has so prolonged my cap-

tivity, by not returning to me. What has become of him ? ”

“He is here, monsieur, the sluggard.”

“What! here? Since when—what is he doing?”

“He is in bed; he says that he has been hung, and is ill.”

“Hung! to rob him of my money, probably.”

“Yes, your ransom. Go, and speak to this idiot about it, and hear what he will say. He came here suddenly, and I gave him 10,000 crowns as he requested. Some days afterwards he returned, looking miserable. He denied having received anything from me, and pretends that he has been a prisoner himself for three months, and did not know what had become of you. He says that you charged him with a mission, and that he was taken prisoner, beaten, and afterwards hung, and that he has only now escaped.”

“I do not understand, Aloyse. I feel sure that Martin is too honest and too devoted to me, to have stolen this money.”

“Yes, monsieur, but I fear he is mad—raving mad. I gave him the money, I will take my oath; Elyot had some trouble to collect it so quickly.”

“He must, however, find me as much more. But never mind that now, I must go to the Louvre.”

“What, monsieur! without any rest? Besides it is only seven o’clock, and you will not be admitted until nine, and the king does not receive until twelve.”

“Still some hours of suspense,” cried Gabriel.

At this moment, Martin Guerre, who had heard his master’s voice, rushed in, pale with joy and from the effects of his ill-treatment.

“It is you, monsieur,” cried he; “what happiness!”

But Gabriel received coldly the transports of his poor squire. “If I am free, Martin, confess that no thanks

are due to you, since you did your best to leave me a prisoner forever."

"What! do you accuse me, also?" cried Martin, in consternation. "You, whom I hoped would have answered for me at once."

"Do you deny that I sent you for my ransom?"

"Oh, yes, I do, monsieur. Do you believe me capable of robbing you?"

"No, Martin, I was just saying so to Aloyse. But you may have been robbed or have lost it in coming to rejoin me."

"To rejoin you! monsieur. I swear to you, that from the day we left St. Quentin, I have not known what became of you. Where could I go to join you?"

"To Calais, Martin; it is impossible that you can forget Calais."

"I never saw Calais in my life, monsieur."

"And Babette?"

"What Babette?"

"Her whom you have ruined."

"Oh, you mean Gudule, monsieur—you mistake the name."

"What! another still. Her, however, I do not know; but I do know Babette Peuquoy."

"Well, monsieur, they all say here that I am mad, and I believe that I shall become so at last; but at present my memory is good, and if you will allow me, I will tell you what has really happened to me during the last three months."

"I shall be curious to hear your account."

Martin then related what the reader is already aware of, and added that when he returned to consciousness, after having been hung, he found himself lying at the foot of the gallows with the rope still round his neck, which had been cut. "Doubtless by a thief," said he,

"for my wedding ring and all my papers were gone. However, be that as it may, I had been cut down in time, and in spite of my rather dislocated neck, I fled a third time—hiding by day, and traveling by night—living on roots and wild herbs, until at last I arrived here."

"Well, Martin, now I will tell you an entirely different story, of which I can testify to the truth."

"The history of my Number 2, monsieur; really I shall be glad to hear it."

At this moment they were interrupted by the entrance of Aloyse, followed by a man dressed as a peasant.

"What does this mean now?" asked she. "Here is a man who has come to announce your death, Martin Guerre."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHEN THE INNOCENCE OF MARTIN GUERRE BEGINS TO
APPEAR.

"My death!" cried Martin.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed the peasant, on seeing him, "how, in the name of heaven, monsieur, is it that you are here before me? I swear to you that I have made all possible haste to execute your commission, and gain your ten crowns; and unless you traveled on horseback, you could not have passed me."

"But I never saw you, and you speak as if you knew me."

"You never saw me! when it was yourself who desired me to come here to announce the death of Martin Guerre, who was hung."

"But I am Martin Guerre."

"You! impossible! you could not tell me of your own death."

"But when and where did I tell you all this?"

"Must I then tell all now?"

"Yes."

"In spite of the tale that you told me to tell?"

"Yes."

"Well, as your memory is so short, and you force me to do it, I will tell all, and no one will be to blame but yourself. Six days ago, early in the morning, I was weeding my field——"

"In the first place—where is your field?"

"Must I tell the truth?"

"Certainly."

"Then my field is near Montargis. I saw you passing, when you said, 'What are you doing, friend?' 'Weeding, monsieur,' I replied. 'What do you earn a day?' you then asked. 'One day with another, four sous.' 'Would you like to gain twenty crowns in a fortnight?' 'Oh, yes!' I answered.

"'Well then,' you replied, 'go to Paris as fast as possible, and ask for the house of the Vicomte d'Exmès, in the Rue St. Paul. He will not be there, but ask for his old nurse, Aloyse, and say to her, I come from Noyon—mind, from Noyon, and not Montargis—where an acquaintance of yours, Martin Guerre, has recently been hung, after having been robbed of all the money that he carried; but before they hung him, he had time to tell me to come here, and acquaint you with his misfortune, and that you were to provide anew a ransom for his master, and were to give me ten crowns for my trouble;' and you gave me ten crowns in advance.

"I was quite willing to go," continued the peasant; "but I said, 'If Madame Aloyse asks me any questions about this Martin Guerre, whom I have never seen?' And you replied, 'Look at me well, and describe him as exactly like me.'"

"How strange!" cried Gabriel.

"I have come," added the man, "to repeat the lesson that you taught me, and I find you here before me, and yet I have been only six days on the road."

"The man lies," said Aloyse; "for he says that he saw Martin six days ago, and he has been in his bed longer than that."

"It must be my Number 2," said Martin.

"Nonsense!" cried Aloyse.

"Not so," said Gabriel; "I believe that this man reveals the truth to us."

"I swear that I speak the truth, monsieur, and I hope you will give me my ten crowns."

"Yes; but you must leave your name and address with me. Some day we may want your testimony. My suspicions are fully aroused; but enough. Now, my man, here is your money—you may go. And now, Aloyse," said he, turning to his nurse, "I will leave you; for I wish to see M. de Guise and the admiral before I go to the king."

"And when you have seen the king, you will return immediately, monsieur?"

"Yes, Aloyse, you may be easy on my account; and you, Martin, remain here, for I must be alone. I will not neglect your justification, but I have another duty to perform first."

As Gabriel was walking along the Place de Grève, he saw before him a man wrapped in a large cloak, and wearing a slouched hat, that almost hid his face. Gabriel was passing him when he said, softly, "Gabriel."

"M. de Coligny—here so early!"

"Hush! I do not wish to be recognized and followed at present; but seeing you, my friend, after so long a separation, and so much uneasiness on your account, I could not refrain from addressing you. How long have you been in Paris?"

"I only arrived this morning, and I was going to call upon you at the Louvre, before asking for an audience of the king."

"Then if you will come a little way with me, you shall tell me what has become of you all this time

"I will tell you all, but first permit me to ask you one question?"

"You are going to ask me if I have kept the promise that I made to you. If I have recounted to the king your glorious defense of St. Quentin."

"No, admiral, that is really not what I was about to ask, for I trusted implicitly to your word. I was sure that your first care on arriving here would be to fulfil your engagement, and generously announce to the king, the share that I had taken in defending St. Quentin, which I have no doubt you even exaggerated. What I wish to know is, what Henri said in reply?"

"Alas! Gabriel, he only replied by asking what had become of you. It was an embarrassing question, for I really did not know; but I replied that I feared you had been taken prisoner."

"And then?"

"The king said, 'It is well,' and smiled. Then, when I recommenced speaking of your services,—'Enough on that subject,' cried he, imperiously, and immediately introduced another topic. But, courage, friend; you know I warned you long ago not to put too much faith in the gratitude of the great of this world."

"Yes, the king has gladly forgotten my rights when he thought me dead or in captivity; but I will make him remember."

"But if he persists in his forgetfulness!"

"Monsieur, when kings do one an injury, one can only appeal to God, who may permit one to be the instrument of His vengeance."

"Do you remember," said Coligny, "a conversation that we once had together about the oppressed Protestants, in which I suggested a sure way of punishing kings without infringing the law?"

"I remember it perfectly, and may some day be glad to use your method."

"That being the case, can you spare me an hour?"

"The king does not receive until noon; up to that time I am at your service."

"Come with me, then. You are a gentleman, and I ask no oath, but a simple promise to keep inviolably secret the names of the persons whom you are about to see, and the things that you are about to hear."

"I promise."

"Follow me, then, and if you meet with injustice at the Louvre, you will know where to turn for revenge."

CHAPTER XL.

A PHILOSOPHER AND A SOLDIER.

COLIGNY stopped before a poor-looking house in the Rue St. Jacques, and knocked, when the outer door was opened, and then, on the porter recognizing Coligny, an inner one. They mounted a great many steps until they came to the attics, and then entered a large but poor-looking room, of which the only furniture was an oaken table and four stools. As Coligny entered two men advanced to meet him.

"Theodore and you, captain," said he, "I bring you a friend, if not of the past or the present, I trust in the future."

They bowed, and then Gabriel drew a little on one side to enable them to converse freely. Presently Coligny came up to him and said—

"I ask your pardon, but I was obliged to consult my companions before letting you know where and with whom you are."

"And may I know now?"

"Yes, in this poor room John Calvin held the first secret meetings of the reformers. He is now triumphant and powerful at Geneva, but his souvenir is sufficient to render these damp walls more precious to us than the golden arabesques of the Louvre."

"And who are these who are present?"

"His disciples. Theodore de Bèze his pen, and La Renaudie his sword."

"Monsieur d'Exmès," said Theodore de Bèze, "you have been introduced here with some precautions, but do not, I entreat, think of us as dangerous conspirators. I hasten to assure you, that, if the heads of our religion meet here three times a week, it is only to communicate news of progress of the reformation, or to receive neophytes who wish to share our perils and our principles. We thank M. de Coligny for bringing you here, for you would indeed be an acquisition to our cause."

"And I, gentlemen," said another man, advancing, "am a humble dreamer attracted by the light of your ideas."

"But it will not be long, Ambroise, before you are counted among our most illustrious brethren," said La Renaudie. "Brothers, he whom I present to you is now obscure, but I feel certain that we shall soon be proud to number amongst us, the surgeon, Ambroise Paré."

"Oh, M. le Capitain."

"By whom has M. Paré been educated?" asked Bèze.

"By the minister Chaudien," said Paré.

"And have you abjured solemnly?"

"Not yet, I wish to be sincere. I confess that I still have some doubts, and certain points are still too obscure to me—for me to give heart and soul to the cause. It is

to clear them up that I wish to attend these meetings; that I would go if necessary to Calvin himself, for truth and liberty are my passions."

"Well said!" cried the admiral.

"Now," said Gabriel, rising, "I know where I am, and for what purpose my generous friend brought me here, where are united those whom Henri calls heretics and enemies. However, I have much more need of instruction than M. Paré. I have acted much, but reflected little, and he would do me a service by recounting to me what reasons or what interests have gained for the reformers his brilliant intellect."

"Not interest," replied he, "for that would have chained me to the party of the court. It is against tyranny that I protest. I wish that each man should be permitted to judge for himself, and that neither priest nor king should have the power to say, 'You must believe and worship thus.' For these principles I would brave all persecution."

"There is both hardihood and revolt in your words, monsieur," said Coligny.

"Revolt—no; but revolutions."

"You must belong to us," said Bèze; "what do you wish?"

"Only the favor of conversing with you sometimes, and laying before you my difficulties as they arise."

"You shall have more; you shall correspond directly with Calvin."

"Such an honor for me!" cried Paré, coloring.

"Yes, he must know you, and you him. A disciple such as you is worthy of such a master. You will give your letters to La Renaudie, who will forward them to Geneva."

"A thousand thanks. Now, I regret to say, I must leave you; many sufferers wait for me."

"Go, then, we part friends and brothers."

Ambroise Paré then left, proud and joyful.

"Alas!" Gabriel then said, "by the side of this disinterested devotion my egotism must appear despicable. Reform, I must admit, would be to me only a means and not an end. In your great and disinterested battle I should fight for my own purposes, and I feel that my motives would be too personal to justify me in joining so pure a cause; you will do well, therefore, to reject me."

"You, doubtless, calumniate yourself," said M. de Bèze, "even if your views be less elevated than those of M. Paré. The ways of God are various, and He does not lead all by the same paths."

"Yes," added Renaudie, "and we seldom obtain such answers as we received from him when we asked, 'What do you desire?'"

"But," said Gabriel, sadly, "M. Paré only asked 'have you truth and justice on your side?' while I am forced to inquire, are you sure that you have sufficient strength, if not to conquer, at least to combat?"

They all look surprised, but Bèze replied, "Whatever may be the motive, M. d'Exmès, which dictates this question, I will reply to it fully and freely. We have, thank God, henceforward, not only truth but strength with us. Our progress has been rapid and incontestable; within the last three years reformed churches have been established in Paris, Blois, Tours, Poitiers, Marseilles, and Rouen. You may see for yourself the immense crowds that we attract to our meetings at the Pré-aux-clercs, nobles and people abandon the fêtes to come and sing with us the psalms of Clement Marot. I believe a fifth of the population to be with us."

"In that case before long I may take an active part among you."

"But if we had been less strong?"

"I confess that I should have chosen other allies."

"Oh!" cried Coligny, "do not judge him severely, my

friends. I have seen him at the siege of St. Quentin, and he who could act as he did there has no vulgar soul. But I know that he has a terrible and secret duty to perform, which does not leave him free to offer his devotion to us."

"But I wish at least to be perfectly candid," said Gabriel; "if circumstances induce me to join you, M. de Coligny will attest that I should bring you a strong arm and heart; but the truth is, that I cannot give myself wholly up to you, for I am claimed by another duty which the wrath of God, and the wickedness of men have imposed upon me, and until this work be finished I am not master of my fate. The destiny of another demands all my exertions."

"It may be a holy devotion," said La Renaudie, "only take care, young man; for if once you belong to us you must be worthy of us. We might admit you into our ranks although you had an exclusive interest from us; but the heart is deceitful. Are you sure that when you think yourself devoted to another, no personal interests enter into your mind? Are you disinterested in the end you pursue?"

"Yes," said Bèze, "we do not ask for your secrets, but look into your heart and ask whether, were you able to reveal them to us you could do so without shame or embarrassment; for a pure cause must be defended by pure hands, otherwise we should bring misfortune upon the cause and upon ourselves."

Gabriel listened to these men who spoke to him at once as friends and as judges, and turned pale, asking himself whether his love for Diana was not really the mainspring of his efforts on behalf of his father. At this moment ten o'clock struck. Gabriel knew he must soon be with the king, therefore, rallying himself, he replied, "You are men standing alone, before whom the most worthy of us feels

himself impure. But if I join you it will not be as a chief but as a soldier. I shall be your hand and that is all; will you refuse my aid?"

"No," said Coligny, "we accept you."

"And we accept as a guarantee," said Renaudie, "the hesitation which our words awoke in your scrupulous heart."

"Thanks, gentlemen, for your confidence; I must now leave you, but I shall not forget what I have heard to-day."

"I will accompany you," said Coligny, "I wish to repeat to the king before you what I have already said to him."

"I should not have dared to ask you this favor, admiral, but I gratefully accept it."

"Let us go, then."

CHAPTER XLI.

WHERE MARIE STUART PASSES AWAY AS QUICKLY AS
SHE DID FROM THE HISTORY OF FRANCE.

WHEN Gabriel and Coligny arrived at the Louvre, the first thing that they heard was that the king did not receive that day, and they had great difficulty in obtaining admission into the building. By bribes and entreaties they managed to penetrate into the gallery outside the apartments of the king, but they could get no further. The orders were strict to admit no one, for the king was engaged with Madame de Poitiers and M. de Montmorency.

Gabriel was in despair. To have to wait again, when he had reckoned upon reaping the reward of all his toil, was maddening to him. Just then a door opened, and Marie Stuart came out. Gabriel instinctively ran towards her, crying out, "Oh! madam."

"You here at last, M. d'Exmès!" said she, smiling; "I

am happy to see you again. But what are you doing here so early?"

"I wish to speak to the king, madam."

"It is really necessary that M. d'Exmès should speak to the king," said the admiral. "The subject is of great importance, and the guards will not admit him."

"I believe that the king is occupied, and I fear——"

"Oh! madam."

"Well, I will risk it," she said, and she gave orders to the guards to permit Gabriel to pass.

"Oh, thanks! madam; you ever come like a guardian angel to help me in my need."

Gabriel was already at the door of the cabinet, when it suddenly opened and the king stood before him. Resolution was not one of Henri's virtues, and, at the sudden sight of Gabriel, he started back.

Gabriel bowed respectfully, and said, "Sire, deign to accept the expression of my respectful homage." Then, turning towards Coligny, he said, "Advance, M. l'Admiral, and, according to your kind promise, repeat to his majesty the share that I took in the defense of St. Quentin."

"What does this mean, monsieur?" cried Henri, beginning to recover himself. "How dare you and M. de Coligny thus intrude yourselves here, contrary to my orders?"

Gabriel, bold on all occasions, replied, "I thought, sire, that your majesty was always ready to render justice to all."

He had profited by the backward movement of the king, to enter the cabinet, where Diana de Poitiers sat, pale with surprise and rage at this bold intrusion.

"I adjure you to speak, M. de Coligny," said he, determined to persevere.

"I will do so," replied he, "for it is my duty, and my

promise "Sire," he continued, turning to the king, "I repeat to you in the presence of M. d'Exmès, all that I felt myself bound to tell you in his absence. It is to him alone, that the credit of the prolonged defense of St. Quentin, even beyond the term named by your majesty, is due. Three times, sire, M. d'Exmès saved the city, and without his courage and energy France would not be, as I trust she now is, on the road to safety."

"Come, nephew, you are too modest or too complaisant," cried Montmorency, unable any longer to control his impatience.

"No, monsieur, I am simply just. I contributed my part, and did my best for the defense of the city which had been entrusted to me, but the Vicomte d'Exmès re-animated the courage of the inhabitants, which I thought had become forever extinct. He introduced into the city a reinforcement, the proximity of which I had no idea, and he discovered an attempted surprise on the part of the enemy, of which I had not even dreamed. I do not speak of courage in actual combat, for we all did our utmost; but what he did accomplish, I will proclaim aloud, however it may diminish my own glory."

"Oh! I thank you, admiral," cried Gabriel, pressing his hand, "for so much openness and generosity. I expected no less from you, but it is a debt of gratitude that I shall never forget. Now, monsieur, I will detain you no longer; you have done more than your duty, and if the king will now, as a first recompense, grant me a few moments' private interview——"

"At another time," cried Henri who had listened with a frowning aspect to all that had passed; "just now it is impossible."

"Impossible, sire!" cried Gabriel, mournfully.

"And why impossible, sire?" said Diana, to the great surprise, both of Gabriel and the king.

"What, madam!" stammered Henri, "you think——"

"I think, sire, that a king's most urgent business is to render justice to every one. Now your debt towards M. d'Exmès is legitimate and sacred."

"Doubtless," said Henri, trying to divine her meaning, "and I wish——"

"To hear M. d'Exmès immediately is justice, sire."

"But," said Gabriel, "I must speak to his majesty alone."

"M. de Montmorency is going, monsieur, and you have yourself dismissed M. de Coligny. As for me, as I was witness to the engagement entered into between you and the king, and can recall the exact terms of it, you will, I trust, allow me to remain."

"Assuredly, madam."

CHAPTER XLII.

THE OTHER DIANA.

IN spite of his great power over himself, Gabriel could not restrain the paleness that overspread his face, nor the agitation of his voice, when he addressed the king.

"Sire," said he, "it is with trembling, and yet with a profound confidence in your royal promise, that I—returned only yesterday from captivity—dare to recall to your majesty the solemn engagement which you deigned to enter into with me. Then, sire, since, by the declaration of M. de Coligny, you are aware that I have more than kept my part of that engagement, keep yours, sire, and restore to me my father."

"Monsieur," said Henri, with hesitation, and looking towards Diana, for he had accustomed himself to think of Gabriel as dead or a captive, and had not determined upon what course to take with regard to him.

Gabriel's heart beat fearfully, but he continued with a sort of despair, "It is impossible, sire, that your majesty can have forgotten your promise to me."

The king was moved in spite of himself, by the grief of the young man, and his generous instincts began to awake. "I remember all," he said.

"Ah! sire, thanks," cried Gabriel, joyfully.

But Madame de Poitiers said quietly, "Doubtless the king remembers—it is you who forget, M. d'Exmès."

Gabriel turned in astonishment, "How? madam; what have I forgotten?"

"Half your task, monsieur. You said to the king, that to purchase the liberty of the Comte de Montmorency, you would arrest the enemy in their triumphant march to Paris."

"And have I not done so, madam?"

"Yes; but you added, 'and if necessary, I will take some town of which they are masters.' That is what you said, monsieur, and what you have not done. We know of the defended city, monsieur, but where is the taken one?"

"Oh, mon Dieu!" cried Gabriel.

"You see, monsieur," continued she, coldly, "that my memory is even better than yours, but I trust that you remember now."

"Yes; it is true that I did say so, but your majesty will not insist on the impossible; and is it not impossible at this time to take a city from the English or the Spaniards? And your majesty accepted the first part of my promise, without saying that, after all my efforts—after my long captivity—I should have a second task to execute. Sire, it is to you that I speak. A city for the liberty of a man—is not that enough? You will not insist on the fulfilment of words that escaped me in my excitement, but which impose a task impossible for any man to perform."

The king was about to speak, but Diana prevented him. "Is it then more easy or more safe," said she, "to set at liberty a prisoner accused of high treason? It is not just that you should exact from the king the fulfilment of his promise when you have only half kept yours. The duties of a sovereign are not less grave than those of a son, and immense services rendered to the State could alone form an excuse to the king for altering the laws of the kingdom. You have to save your father, but the king has to guard France."

Then Gabriel, trying one last effort, cried with clasped hands, "Sire, it is to you—to your justice and to your clemency that I appeal. Sire, later, and under more favorable circumstances, I swear to take this city or to die in the attempt."

Henri, instructed by the glance of Diana, replied firmly, "Keep your promise to the end, monsieur, and then—and then only—I swear that I will keep mine."

"Is this your final determination, sire?"

"It is."

Gabriel remained for a moment overwhelmed with emotion, anger, and disappointment. Various ideas floated rapidly through his mind—he would have vengeance on this ungrateful king and perfidious woman—he would throw himself into the ranks of the reformers. It should be henceforth the sole end and aim of his life to punish, without mercy, Henri and Diana. But his father, before then, would have died. To avenge him was well, but to save him was better. In his position, perhaps, to take a city was less difficult than to punish a king; besides, by the one he might win Diana, and by the other he would lose her forever.

In less time than we have taken to write this, his resolution was taken, and he raised his head proudly, saying, "So be it, sire; I have decided."

"To do what?"

"Confess, sire, that my intended attempt to wrest a city from the enemy appears to you desperate and hopeless."

"It is true," replied Henri.

"In all probability this attempt will cost me my life, without producing any other result than to make me pass for a madman."

"It is not I who proposed it," said the king, "and it would be wise of you to abandon it."

"Nevertheless I undertake it."

The king could not repress a movement of admiration.

"Only," continued Gabriel, "let there be no misunderstanding this time. Let our engagement be clear and precise. I, Gabriel, Comte d' Exmès, promise to place in your power a city now actually in the hands of the enemy; and you engage immediately afterwards to open my father's cell, and restore him to me. You promise me this?"

"I do."

"I do not ask you, sire, for a written promise, but lay your royal hand on this Bible and take this oath—'In exchange for a city to be placed in my hands by M. Gabriel de Montgomery, I engage by this sacred book to restore to him his father; and I declare that, if I violate this oath, the said Gabriel shall be absolved from all oaths of fidelity towards me and mine, and that all he may do to punish such perjury shall be lawful before God and man.'"

"By what right do you ask such an oath, monsieur?"

"By the right of a man about to die, sire."

"I swear, then," said the king; and he repeated the oath.

"Now, sire, I leave you; in two months I shall be dead, or I shall come here again to claim my father's liberty." Thus saying, he bowed and retired.

"This time he cannot escape," said Diana.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A GREAT IDEA FOR A GREAT MAN.

THE Duc de Guise occupied apartments in the Louvre. He was alone in his room when some one knocked at the door, and announced the Vicomte d'Exmès.

"The Vicomte d'Exmès!" cried he, "my young companion in arms—let him enter immediately, Thibault," and, advancing towards the door, he pressed him in his arms, saying, "Ah! it is you at last, Gabriel. Where do you come from, and what has become of you since the siege of St. Quentin? I have often thought and spoken of you."

"Really! monseigneur, have you kept a place for me in your memory?"

"You have taken care that we should not forget you. Coligny, who is worth all the rest of the Montmorencys put together, has told me some of your exploits, and yet he says that he has kept back half."

"Nevertheless, I have done too little," said Gabriel, sadly.

"Ambitious?" asked the duke.

"Yes, very ambitious," said Gabriel, with a sigh.

"However, I am glad that you have returned at last; we have great need of brave men, for France is reduced to sad extremities."

"I am ready to do all I can, monseigneur."

"I confess, Gabriel, that I find my position an embarrassing one. I have organized a force to surround and defend Paris, which is the first consideration, and shall present a formidable resistance to the enemy, should they advance; but that is nothing—there is St. Quentin and the North. It seems to me that the best thing to be

done is, by some bold stroke, to raise the spirits of the army, and revive our old glorious reputation—to assume the offensive, and not only avenge our losses, but change them into successes.”

“That is also my wish,” cried Gabriel, delighted with a speech which coincided so entirely with his own views.

“When and where to attempt it is the difficulty,” said the duke.

“I think that I know, monseigneur.”

“Is it possible? Speak, then, my friend.”

“Mon Dieu, great as you are, monseigneur, I fear that you will think my project rash and hopeless.”

“I am not easily frightened.”

“Nevertheless, I fear that you will at first condemn my suggestion as impossible, but in truth it is only difficult and perilous.”

“That is the greater attraction.”

At this moment Thibault knocked at the door. “Monseigneur ordered me to tell him,” said he, “when the hour arrived for the council to sit, and two o’clock is now striking. M. de St. Remy and the other gentlemen will be here immediately to accompany monseigneur.”

“It is true, and I must attend. Gabriel, you shall give me all details this evening, but satisfy my curiosity, and tell me in two words what you propose to do.”

“Take Calais, monseigneur.”

“Take Calais!” cried the duke, starting up in surprise.

“You promised not to be astonished, monseigneur.”

“But have you thought of it well—of its formidable garrison and its impregnable ramparts overlooking the sea—Calais, which has been for two hundred years in the possession of the English, and which they guard as the key of France? I love what is bold, but this is rash to folly.”

“Yes, monseigneur, but it is just because it is rash and

no one will dream of the attempt being made, that we shall succeed. By keeping our intentions absolutely secret, and arriving unexpectedly, Calais will be ours in fifteen days."

"But your plans?" said the duke.

"Are simple and sure, monseigneur." Gabriel had not time to finish, for the door opened and the Comte de St. Remy entered, and announced that his majesty waited for M. de Guise.

"Can you return at eight o'clock, Gabriel?"

"I will be punctual, monseigneur;" and they quitted the Louvre.

CHAPTER XLIV.

GABRIEL'S PREPARATIONS.

ALOYSE was looking most anxiously for the return of Gabriel from the Louvre. When she saw him, she ran to him, and with eyes full of tears, cried, "God be thanked that I see you again. Have you seen the king?"

"Yes, Aloyse."

"Well?"

"Well, my good nurse, we must wait a little longer."

"Wait longer! Holy Virgin! it is difficult to wait so long."

"It would be impossible, were I not to act meanwhile." He entered into his room, and saw Martin Guerre sitting in a corner plunged, apparently, in deep thought.

"What are you thinking of so deeply, Martin?" said he.

"Monsieur, I was endeavoring to solve the enigma of that man's story."

"And have you succeeded?"

"No, monsieur, I cannot penetrate it."

"Well, I think I see light through it. But can you

for a while forget yourself, and devote all your energies to assist me?"

"Oh! monsieur, it is both my duty and my pleasure. I have been too long separated from you, and I am ready to follow you all over the world."

"Reflect, Martin, that the enterprise into which I am about to embark is full of dangers."

"Oh! we shall escape them."

"We shall risk our lives a hundred times."

"Well, if we do, peril and I are no strangers, and after having been hung I fear nothing else."

"Then you will share my fate, and follow me?"

"Anywhere, monsieur."

"And do you think that you can find me a dozen men of your own stamp, who do not fear fire and sword—who can bear cold and hunger—and will obey like angels, and fight like demons?"

"Will they be well paid?"

"A gold franc for each drop of blood, if you like. My fortune is the last thing that I consider in this task of mine."

"Oh! it is easy to find men on those terms; I can mention five or six at once, some of our old soldiers in Lorraine."

"And they must be prepared to set out at a moment's notice, and without even asking their destination."

"They will march towards glory and money blindfold, monsieur."

"Very well, I count upon them and upon you."

About six o'clock Martin Guerre entered. "Monsieur," said he, "will it please you to receive five or six of those who aspire to the honor of serving under you?"

"What! already?"

"Yes, monsieur; these are unknown to you, and my old companions will make up the dozen."

“Well, let me see them.”

“I can answer for their courage, monsieur, if you will be indulgent towards certain little traits of character.”

Gabriel examined the candidates, and approved of them as men likely to suit his purpose. He then thanked Martin Guerre for the zeal and promptitude he had displayed, and took his way to the Louvre to keep his appointment with the Duc de Guise.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE MESSENGER.

TOWARDS the end of the month of November, three weeks after the departure of Gabriel from Calais, a messenger presented himself at one of the gates of the city, and asked for Lord Wentworth, to whom he was bringing the ransom of his late prisoner. He was introduced into the governor's room, who received from him the money, and then said,—

“Has M. le Vicomte d'Exmès charged you simply to deliver this money without any message?”

“Yes, my lord,” replied the messenger, with a stupid look of astonishment; “my master gave no other orders.”

“Oh!” said Lord Wentworth, with a disdainful smile, “he has become more reasonable I see; the air of the court of France is full of forgetfulness.”

“Has your lordship any message for my master?”

“No,—yet stay—you may tell him that I shall be at his orders until the 1st of January. He will understand.”

“I will tell him, my lord.”

On leaving Lord Wentworth, the messenger walked about Calais for some time, and then took his way to the house of Pierre Peuquoy, when he announced himself as coming from Gabriel.

"Speak," cried Pierre, "we knew he would not forget us; what do you bring from him?"

"His compliments and thanks, this purse of gold and this message—'Remember the 5th,' which he said you would understand."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"But have you no message for my cousin Jean or my sister Babette?"

"No, I have said all that I was told."

"One moment," said Jean; "if you are in the service of M. d' Exmès you must know among your companions one named Martin Guerre."

"Oh! yes, the squire; I know him well."

"Did he know you were coming here?"

"Yes, he was present when I set off."

"And he sent no message to any one in this house?"

"None at all."

"He perhaps told you to give your message secretly. But if so, learn that the precaution has become needless; we know the truth, for the grief of the person to whom Martin Guerre owes reparation has revealed all to us. But if you have any scruples this person shall come and speak to you alone."

"Ma foi," replied the man, "I swear to you I do not understand a word of all this."

"Enough, Jean," interrupted Pierre, "you have dwelt long enough upon our shame."

"Will you please to count the money?" said the messenger.

"It is needless. Tell your master that we remember the 5th, and add also, that we shall expect him within a month, and that if he remembers so well the money lent, he should not forget a secret confided to him of much more importance."

"I will tell my master all you say."

The messenger then left, and after many détours, at last regained the gates and left Calais. He walked briskly for about an hour, and then sat down on a bank to rest, while a smile passed over his face.

"They appear to me very mysterious in this city of Calais," thought he, "and M. d'Exmès and Martin Guerre seem to have left some enmities behind them. However, I have all I wished—I had neither pen nor paper, it is true, but it is all in my head, and with the plan of M. d'Exmès to help me, I can draw the whole place. All is clear; the Duc de Guise will be content, and in six weeks we shall be masters of Calais as sure as my name is Strozzi."

It was indeed Pierre Strozzi, one of the cleverest engineers of the fourteenth century, who had gone to Calais as Gabriel's messenger.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE 31ST OF DECEMBER, 1557.

MADAME DE CASTRO appeared to hate the governor daily more and more. She sought every pretext to avoid seeing him, and when forced to do so, her reception of him was icy cold. He, on his part, always endeavored to remain the perfect gentleman who had left at the court of Mary of England such a reputation for courtesy. He overwhelmed her with attentions; she was served with princely luxury, and her room was filled with costly presents which he had sent from London expressly for her, but which, however, she scarcely looked at.

Each day he said to himself that it would be far better for his own peace of mind to accept the ransom offered by Henry the Second, and set Diana at liberty. But this

would restore her to Gabriel, and for this he had not courage. On the 31st of December, 1557, he had succeeded in obtaining admittance into her room. To see her, even though severe to him, and to hear her, though ironical and reproachful, had become a necessity to him. Scarcely, however, had he entered on this day, when an archer knocked at the door, and immediately entered the room.

"Who dares to interrupt me thus?" cried Lord Wentworth.

"Pardon me, my lord, but Lord Derby sent me in haste."

"And for what?"

"Because he has just heard that an advanced guard of two thousand French arquebusiers were seen yesterday ten leagues from Calais."

"Ah!" cried Diana, joyfully.

"And for this nonsense you have had the audacity to interrupt me!" said Lord Wentworth. "Lord Derby takes mole-hills for mountains; go, and tell him so from me."

"Lord Derby wishes the guards to be doubled, my lord."

"Let them remain as they are, and do not trouble me again with these ridiculous fancies. And you, madam," said he to Diana, when the archer was gone, "do not rejoice too soon; I can give you the explanation of this false alarm. Either MM. Guise and Nevers wish to revictual Andres and Boulogne, or else they are simulating an attempt against Calais, and then retracing their steps they will endeavor to regain one of those places."

"And who tells you, my lord," cried Diana, imprudently, "that it is not a feigned attack upon some other place to conceal a real one upon Calais?"

Happily she had to deal with a firm conviction. "I have already had the honor of telling you, madam,"

replied Lord Wentworth, "that Calais is a town which is impregnable. Before they can approach it, they must take the forts St. Agatha and Nieulay. This would occupy a fortnight, and during that period, England would have time to send us reinforcements, and all necessary supplies. Take Calais! I cannot help laughing when I think of it."

At this moment Lord Derby himself entered the room. "My lord," cried he, "I was right! The French are actually advancing on Calais in force."

"It is impossible!" cried Lord Wentworth, changing color, in spite of his assurance. "Some rumor——"

"Alas! no. It is unfortunately a fact," interrupted Lord Derby.

"Speak lower, Derby," said Lord Wentworth, approaching him. "What do you mean?"

"The French have already attacked St. Agatha. Nothing was ready to receive them, and I much fear that they are already masters of this fort, which is the bulwark of Calais."

"Well! they are still far off."

"Yes, but there is no other obstacle to their progress except Nieulay, and that is only two miles distant."

"Have you sent reinforcements, Derby?"

"Yes, my lord, excuse me, without, and in fact against, your orders."

"You did well."

"But they must have arrived too late."

"Who knows? Do not let us be cast down. We will go at once to Nieulay, and even if they have taken St. Agatha we will soon drive them out of it again."

"God grant it."

"Who is in command of the enemy—do you know?"

"Probably M. de Guise. My informant saw no one but your old prisoner, the Vicomte d'Exmès."

"Devil take him!" cried the governor, furiously. "Come, Derby."

Diana had overheard a great part of this conversation, though it was carried on in a low tone, and her heart beat with joy.

CHAPTER XLVII.

DURING THE CANNONADE.

LORD DERBY was not deceived in his conjectures. The troops of M. de Guise and M. de Nevers had arrived unexpectedly, thanks to a forced march, before the fort of St. Agatha. Three thousand men had carried the fort by surprise in less than an hour. Lord Wentworth arrived with Lord Derby at Nieulay only in time to see his troops flying for refuge to the second outwork of Calais.

"These French must be mad," cried he, "but we will make them pay dearly for their folly. Two centuries ago Calais held out for a year against the English, and in their hands it will hold out for ten. But before the end of the week we shall see our enemies in flight: they have gained this first success by surprise, but now that we are on our guard we may laugh at this attack of M. de Guise."

"Shall you send to England for reinforcements?" asked Lord Derby.

"It is quite needless. If these men persist in their folly, before three days, and while we hold them at bay, the English and Spanish troops already in France will come to our assistance; and at any time, if necessary, a message to Dover would bring us troops in twenty-four hours. At present it is unnecessary—our nine hundred men and good walls will give them plenty to do."

By the next day, however, the French had crossed the bridge, and were attacking the fort. It was then, amidst



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The Two Dianas

the noise of artillery, that a sad and solemn family scene took place in the old house of the Peuquoys.

As the questions addressed by them to the messenger of the Vicomte d'Exmès must have already informed the reader, Babette had no longer been able to hide from her brother and cousin her tears and the cause of them. She was, indeed, unhappy, for the reparation which the pretended Martin Guerre owed to her was necessary now, not only to herself, but to her child. However, in admitting her fault she did not add that Martin was married, and that she had consequently no hope. She tried to deceive herself on this point, and to think that Gabriel must have been mistaken.

On the 1st of January she received a summons from Pierre. She obeyed, pale and trembling.

"Sit down, Babette," said Pierre. "At first," he continued, "when moved by our alarm and our entreaties, you confided to us the cause of your grief, I could not, I confess, control my anger, and I regret to say I upbraided and even threatened you; but fortunately Jean interposed between us."

Babette turned her grateful and tearful eyes towards her cousin.

"That was but natural," said Jean, "for it was not the way to cure your ills to afflict you still further."

"So I now feel," continued Pierre. "Besides, your tears and repentance touched me; I pity you, Babette, and forgive you the disgrace that you have brought upon our hitherto stainless name."

"God will be merciful to you, brother, as you have been merciful to me."

"And then, also, Jean reminded me that your misfortune was not irreparable, and that he who led you into error ought to make atonement for it."

Babette hung her head.

"However," continued Pierre, "we have heard nothing from Martin Guerre or his master on the subject; but now that the French are before the walls, and doubtless they are with them, I wish to ask you, Babette, how we are to behave towards them. Are they to be friends or enemies?"

"Whichever you please, brother," answered she, frightened.

"But, Babette, what do you imagine to be their intentions?"

"I imagine nothing, I only wait."

"Then you do not know whether the roaring of the cannon which serves as an accompaniment to my words announces liberators whom we may bless, or traitors whom we must punish? You are not ignorant, Babette, that I have always looked upon the English as foreigners and oppressors, and three months ago no music would have seemed so sweet to me as that which is now sounding in my ears. Now in the plebeian hands of your brother rests, perhaps, at this moment, the fate of this city. Yes, these poor hands, blackened by daily toil, can give to the King of France the keys of Calais."

"And you hesitate!" cried Babette.

"Not if I could give them up to the king himself, or to M. de Guise; but it is to M. d'Exmès that I must give them, and, although I should be proud to share this work with my late guest whose squire should become my brother, I should hesitate to do so with a gentleman who has pitilessly contributed to our dishonor."

"M. d'Exmès, so good—so compassionate!"

"It is not the less true that he knows of your misfortune by your confession as his squire does by his conscience, and yet they both remain silent."

"But what could M. d'Exmès do?"

"He could on his return to Paris have sent Martin back,

and ordered him to marry you ; instead of which he sends a stranger with a purse of gold."

"No, no, he could not," cried Babette, sadly ; "it would have been useless."

"What do you mean—are you mad, Babette?"

"No, unfortunately, for the mad forget. Ah ! pardon me once more, my brother ; I wished to hide it—he told me——"

"What?" cried Pierre.

"Yes, the day he went away, when I begged him to give Martin this ring, I did not tell him, but he must have known—he said that—that—Martin Guerre was married already."

"Ah ! wretch," cried Pierre, quite beside himself, and he rushed with uplifted arm towards his sister.

She sank fainting on the floor.

Jean ran to his cousin, crying, "Hold, Pierre ; it is not the victim, but the traitor, that you must strike."

"It is true," said Pierre, ashamed of his passion, and he drew back with gloomy and somber expression while Jean tried to recall Babette to consciousness.

"What is the matter? Oh, my cousin!" were her exclamations on recovering and recognizing Jean.

Jean looked almost happy. "Hope, Babette, hope!" said he.

Then seeing her brother, she said, "Pardon me, Pierre."

"Reassure yourself," said he ; "you have suffered enough, and I will reproach you no longer. I also say, hope."

"What can I hope for now?"

"Not reparation, but vengeance."

"And I," whispered Jean, "promise both."

Babette looked surprised, but Pierre advancing towards her, said, "Once more, sister, I pardon and love you, but my anger will fall doubly on him."

"Oh, brother!"

"Yes, for him no pity. But to his master I owe reparation."

"I thought," cried Jean, "that he could not have deceived us."

"Jean, do you know what that cannon tells us? It intimates that M. d'Exmès is here, and it also intimates—'Remember the 5th.'"

"Oh!" cried Babette, "if Martin also be here.—But no—his master must have dismissed him, or at all events will not have brought him here."

"I will follow him to Paris," cried Pierre.

"Ah! that is just what I fear—not for him, for I love him no longer—but for you, Pierre, and you, Jean."

"Then, Babette," said Jean, "in a contest between us, it would be for me and not for him that you would fear?"

"Ah! Jean, that question is indeed a puishment to me. Between you, so good and kind, and him so vile and barbarous, could I hesitate now?"

"Thanks," said Jean, "you make me happy."

"He will be punished," said Pierre. "But now let us speak of him no longer; we have much to do, and only three days to prepare. We must see our friends and make all ready for the 5th."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

UNDER THE TENT.

THREE days after, on the evening of the 4th, the French, in spite of Lord Wentworth's predictions, continued to progress. They had taken the fort of Nieullay, with a large store of arms and ammunition—a result well worth the three days' hard fighting they had gone through.

"It is a frightful dream!" cried Lord Wentworth, as his soldiers fled and he himself was forced to fly with them.

"Happily," said Lord Derby, "Calais and the old castle can hold out some days longer, and the way to England is still open."

Lord Wentworth was forced to stifle his pride and send an express to Dover for reinforcements, and meanwhile he concentrated all his energies on the defense of the old castle, which was the most valuable part of Calais.

Let us now see what was passing among the assailants. Let us enter this tent placed a little to the right of the French camp, for here we shall find Gabriel and his little troop of volunteers. Gabriel, seated in a corner, seemed buried in profound thought. Martin Guerre was seated near him mending the strap of a sword-belt, and not far from them on a heap of cloaks lay, moaning, a wounded man. The rest were grouped around, some playing with dice, and others conversing.

At a more doleful groan from the wounded man, Gabriel looked up and said, "What time is it, Martin?"

"I think about six o'clock, monsieur."

"And at six the surgeon promised to come. Ah! here he is, I think."

Gabriel saw, to his surprise, M. Ambroise Paré enter the tent. "M. Paré!" he exclaimed, "I did not know you were here."

"I always try to be where I can be most useful," he replied.

"I am glad of it, for I have need of your skill."

"Not for yourself, I hope?"

"No; for one of my men, who this morning received a thrust from a lance in the shoulder."

"In the shoulder—that is probably not dangerous,"

"I fear it is, for one of his comrades tried so unskilfully to withdraw the lance, that he broke it, and the iron head remained in the wound."

M. Paré made a grimace of bad augury, but he said, "Let us see, however."

They led him to the patient, when, taking off the linen which covered the shoulder, he examined the wound. He looked grave, but said, "It will be nothing."

"Then can I fight again to-morrow?" asked the man.

"I fear not," said Paré, probing the wound.

"Ah! you hurt me."

"I know it; courage, my friend."

"Oh, I have that; besides, this is bearable. Will it be worse when you extract that cursed lance?"

"No, for here it is," said Paré, holding it out.

"I am much obliged to you, monsieur," said the patient.

A murmur of astonishment and admiration greeted the achievement of M. Paré.

"What! is all finished?" cried Gabriel. "It is wonderful."

"The patient was not delicate," said Paré.

"Nor the operator unskilful," said a voice from behind, at which every one drew back.

"M. le Duc de Guise!" said Paré.

"Yes, and who is delighted with your skill. By St. Francis, I have been at the hospital, where I have seen doctors who do more harm to our men with their instruments than the English with their weapons; but you drew out the head of that lance as easily as if it had been a white hair. What is your name, monsieur?"

"Ambroise Paré."

"Well, your fortune is made on one condition."

"What is that, monseigneur?"

"That if I am wounded, you will take charge of me,

and will treat me as unceremoniously as you did that poor devil there."

"Monseigneur, I will do so; all men are alike when they suffer. But if your grace will permit, I will close and bandage this wound, for so many others are waiting for me."

"Do so, and do not think of me."

"Now that thing is out, I suppose I am nearly well?" said the patient.

"Yes."

"Then, when can I fight again?"

"Fight! I order you eight days of absolute rest, with low diet."

"Low diet if you like, but let me fight."

"You are mad; if you rise, fever will seize you, and you will die."

"I beg you, monseigneur, to permit me to send Malewort to the hospital, for if he hears the sound of battle, he is certain to get up in spite of all orders."

"Send him by some of your men."

"I think I shall want my men to-night, monseigneur."

"I will send a litter for him," said Paré, as he took leave.

When he was gone, Gabriel and the duke withdrew into a corner of the tent to talk in private.

CHAPTER XLIX.

LITTLE BARKS SOMETIMES SAVE GREAT SHIPS.

"WELL, monseigneur, are you content with what we have done?" asked Gabriel.

"Yes, my friend, content with what we have done, but, I confess, not sanguine as to the result."

"What is wrong, then? We have, I think, surpassed all your hopes; in four days we have taken the two principal defenses of Calais, and the English cannot hold out more than forty-eight hours longer."

"Yes, but that is enough to ruin all."

"Monseigneur must permit me to doubt that."

"No, friend; my experience does not deceive me. Except for some unforeseen event or chance beyond our calculation, our enterprise is doomed—believe me."

"Not so, monseigneur," said Gabriel, with a smile.

"Gabriel, the strange and hazardous attempt into which you have beguiled me, could only succeed through the surprise of the garrison. You calculated rightly, and we have done well, so far; and you were also right in saying that Lord Wentworth would be too proud to send for assistance. Thus we have taken St. Agatha by surprise, and Nieulay by storm."

"So that now," said Gabriel, "if reinforcements arrive, they will find that instead of the guns of Lord Wentworth to support them, they will have the batteries of the Duc de Guise to oppose them."

"Certainly, but unfortunately this is not the only approach to the city. You forget the Risbank, or rather the Octagon tower, overlooking the sea, which commands the whole port. If they send to Dover, they will have, in a few hours, enough men to hold this place for years. Lord Wentworth, convinced at last, has now sent for this aid, and by this time to-morrow it will be here, and will oppose to us an invincibly superior force. Even if we hold our ground, all the English and Spaniards, from Ham and St. Quentin, will surround and besiege us in their turn, and we shall be taken between two armies."

"Then what do you think of doing, monseigneur, to prevent this catastrophe?"

"Our only chance—a poor one, alas!—is to try to—

morrow, to carry the old castle by assault. It is less rash, at least, than to await the arrival of fresh English troops. The French fury, as they say in Italy, may possibly overcome these formidable walls."

"No, it will fail," said Gabriel; "we shall lose half our men, and be repulsed."

"If so, we must retreat at once, to save the remnant of our army for better times."

"The conqueror of Metz recommend a retreat!"

"Better than to persist after defeat, like M. de Montmorency at St. Laurent."

"It would, nevertheless, be disastrous for the glory of France and your reputation, monseigneur."

"Alas! I know it. If I had succeeded, I should have been a hero—a demi-god. If I fail, I shall be only a vain and presumptuous man who merits his fall. It will adjourn, and perhaps destroy, all my hopes and ambitions."

"I see you, monseigneur, in one of those movements of doubt, which sometimes in the midst of the greatest works seize the greatest minds. However, it is certainly not the great genius and captain to whom I have the honor of speaking, who would lightly have engaged in so great an enterprise. You must have foreseen all this; how comes it that you are at a loss now?"

"Mon Dieu! Gabriel, I think your youthful enthusiasm and assurance fascinated and blinded me."

"Monseigneur!"

"Oh! I am not reproaching you; your idea was grand and patriotic. Nevertheless, remember, I founded my objections on the extremity to which we are now reduced, and you destroyed them."

"And how?"

"You promised me that, if in a few days we could master the forts of St. Agatha and Nieullay, your friends in the city would place in your hands the fort of Risbank,

and that thus Calais could neither be succored by sea or land. You must remember this."

"Well, monseigneur?"

"Well, your hopes have been deceived, have they not? Your friends in Calais, have they not deceived you? They are not yet sure of our success, and they will only come forward in case we need them no longer."

"Excuse me, monseigneur, who told you so?"

"Your silence. Now is the time to save us, yet you do not speak, and your friends make no sign."

"I love better to act than to speak."

"What! do you still hope?"

"Yes, monseigneur, or I should not live."

"Then the fort of Risbank——?"

"Will belong to us if I am alive."

"But it must be to-morrow."

"And you shall have it to-morrow, unless I fall before then."

"Gabriel, what are you about to do? Brave some mortal danger—run some insensate risk? I will not have it—France has need of men like you."

"Do not be uneasy, monseigneur; if the risk is great, so is the aim. Think only of profiting by the result, and leave the means to me."

"Tell me, at least how I may aid you."

"Monseigneur, I have a request to make."

"Speak."

"To-morrow, about eight in the morning, send some one to the promontory from whence the fort of Risbank is seen. If the English flag continue to float then, hazard then the desperate assault you spoke of, for I shall have failed—that is to say, I shall be dead. Lose no time in regretting me, but prepare at once for your last grand effort, and God grant it may succeed. You would have at least four hours before the English succors could arrive."

"But you, Gabriel, have you any chance of success?"

"Yes, I have; therefore be patient, and do not give the signal for the assault too soon. You will only have to continue quietly the works of the miners, and wait for the right moment if, at eight o'clock, you see on the fort of Risbank the standard of France——"

"The standard of France!" cried the duke.

"Where its view would, I think," continued Gabriel "arrest the ships coming from England."

"I think so too. But how will you do this?"

"Leave me my secret, monseigneur. I compromise neither you nor the army, and shall employ no men but my own volunteers."

"And why this pride?"

"It is not pride; but, if your grace remembers, you promised me that if by execution as well as by idea I contributed in an important way to the taking of Calais, you would declare this, not publicly, where all the honor is due to you as chief, but privately to the king."

"Certainly, Gabriel, that is no great boon; and, publicly or privately, I shall always be ready to do justice to you."

"All I wish is, that the king should know it."

"But can I not assist you to-night?"

"Yes, monseigneur, if you will give me the password, so that I may go out with my men when I wish."

"It is 'Calais, and Charles.'"

"And, monseigneur, if I fall, will you remember that Madame Diana de Castro is a prisoner of Lord Wentworth's, and may I claim your protection for her?"

"I will not forget her. Anything else?"

"Yes, monseigneur, I am to be assisted to-night by a fisherman, named Anselmo; if he fall with me, I have written to Elyot, my steward, to provide for his wife and children; will you see that this is done?"

"I will ; is that all ?"

"All ; only, if you see me no more, think of me with some kindness ! and now I will say adieu !"

"Do not be sad, Gabriel, something tells me that we shall meet again."

"If so, it will be in Calais as a French town."

"In that case you will have saved my honor and that of France from great peril."

"Little barks, monseigneur, sometimes save great ships."

CHAPTER L.

OBSCURI SOLA SUB NOCTE.

WHEN Gabriel returned to his place, he made a sign to Martin Guerre, who immediately rose and left the tent, but returned in about a quarter of an hour, bringing with him a man poorly clad.

"Monsieur," said he, "here is our man."

"You are the fisherman, Anselmo ?" said Gabriel.

"Yes, monsieur."

"And you know the service we require of you ?"

"Your squire has told me, and I am ready."

"He has told you that we run considerable risk in this expedition ?"

"I knew that as well as he could tell me."

"And yet you have come ?"

"I am at your orders, monsieur."

"It is the act of a brave man."

"Rather of a despairing one. I risk my life every day for a few fish, and often catch none ; it is then no great thing to risk it for you who pay me handsomely, and promise to provide for my wife and children. Certainly it is an awful night to go on the sea, but that is as much your

affair as mine, and you have paid me in advance ; I am content, and I trust you are so."

"Can your boat hold fourteen persons?"

"It has held twenty."

"You will need help in rowing?"

"Oh, yes, I shall have enough to do to attend to the helm and the sail, if that can be put up."

"Well, my men can do that."

"But where are we to land?"

"At the fort of Risbank."

"At the fort of Risbank!"

"Yes, what objection have you?"

"It is scarcely possible ; it is all rock."

"Do you refuse to take us?"

"Ma foi, no ; I will do my best and take you there if I can."

"At what time must we be ready?"

"You wish to arrive at four o'clock?"

"Yes, not sooner."

"Then we must allow two hours for the sea, and one from here to the place where we embark."

"Then we will set out at one o'clock."

"That will do well."

"We must now warn our men."

"Comrades," cried Martin, "there is an expedition for to-night."

"Bravo ! bravo !" cried many voices.

"What sort of work ?" asked one.

"A surprise. Now you had better all sleep for some hours, and we will wake you when necessary."

They were soon all asleep except Gabriel, who could not rest. Towards one o'clock he awoke his men, who got up and armed in silence, and then went quietly out of the tent.

CHAPTER LI.

BETWEEN TWO ABYSSES.

THE fort of Risbank, or the Octagon tower, was built, as we have said, at the entrance of the port of Calais, and its black and formidable mass rested on a huge bed of rock against which the sea broke in stormy weather. On the night in question the sea was very menacing, and was uttering those immense and sorrowful groans which make it resemble a soul in trouble.

When the sentinels were changed, the new-comer, after looking anxiously over the sea, moved with a strong arm his sentry-box, and drew from underneath it a huge rope-ladder, one end of which he fastened firmly to the top of the tower, while the other, which was weighted with two heavy balls of lead, fell to the rocks at its base. Scarcely had he finished when the night patrol passed; but he was again at his post, and they observed nothing.

On the sea, after more than two hours of extraordinary exertion, a boat manned by fourteen men had at last reached the foot of the tower. A wooden ladder was placed against the rock, which reached to a ledge, upon which five or six men could stand. One by one these bold adventurers climbed the ladder, and when they arrived at the ledge continued to ascend the rock by the help of their hands and feet. The night was dark, and the rock slippery, and one of the men lost his footing and fell into the sea. Luckily the last of the fourteen men was still in the boat which he was vainly trying to fasten before he began the ascent.

The man who had fallen, and who had had the courage

to utter no cry, swam vigorously towards the boat into which the other drew him, saying,—

“What! is it you, Martin; how came you to slip?”

“Better I than another who might have cried out.”

“Well, as you are here, help me to fasten the boat to this great root.”

“The root will not hold it, monsieur, and the boat will be lost.”

“I see nothing better to do.”

They secured it, but had scarcely left it and commenced the ascent when a violent wave broke it from its fastenings and carried it out into the sea.

“There goes our boat,” cried Martin, “and if your friends be not there, or anything goes wrong, all hope or chance of retreat is taken from us.”

“Well, so much the better; now we must succeed or die! Our companions must have arrived at the foot of the tower—let us hasten to join them, and be careful, Martin, not to slip again.”

After a hard climb they reached the others who were waiting anxiously for them on the rock at the foot of the tower. Gabriel perceived, with unspeakable joy, the rope-ladder, hanging from the top.

“You see, my friends,” said he, “that we are expected. Thank God for it, for there is no retreat for us—our bark is carried away. So forward, and may God help us. The cord and the fastenings are substantial, I hope?”

“They are like iron, monsieur; thirty men might go upon it.”

Then slowly and silently these fourteen intrepid men hazarded their lives one after another on this frail ladder swayed by the wind. It was nothing as long as Gabriel, who went last, was only a few steps from the foot; but, as they advanced, the ladder shook beneath them, and the peril increased frightfully. It would have been a terrible

spectacle to have seen those men scaling silently this black wall at the top of which was a possible death, and at the bottom a certain one.

At the hundred and fiftieth step, Yvounet, the first man, stopped, as agreed on, and all the others did the same. They were to rest there long enough to repeat two paters and two aves. When Martin had finished his, he saw with astonishment that Yvounet did not move. He thought he had been too quick, and repeated a third pater and ave: still Yvounet did not stir. Then, although they were only about one hundred feet from the summit, and it had become dangerous to speak, Martin struck gently the legs of Yvounet, saying, "Go on."

"I cannot," replied he.

"Why not?"

"I am so giddy."

A cold perspiration broke out on Martin's brow, for if Yvounet were to fall, they must all fall with him. Not knowing what to do, he turned a little towards Anselmo, who followed him, and whispered,—*"Yvounet is giddy."*

This dreadful news was soon passed down to Gabriel by the terrified men.

CHAPTER LII.

ARNOLD DU THILL STILL EXERCISES A FATAL INFLUENCE OVER MARTIN GUERRE.

It was a moment of terrible anguish to Gabriel, with the sea below him, and twelve trembling men clinging to the ladder above him. Happily he was not a man to lose courage, so without thinking of the danger of the attempt, he clung by the side of the ladder, and so passed the men before him, until he arrived by the side of Martin Guerre.

"Will you advance?" he then said, in an imperious voice, to Yvounet.

"It is impossible—I feel that if my feet or my hands quit the ladder, I shall fall."

"We shall see," said Gabriel; and raising himself a little, he placed his poniard against Yvounet's back, saying, "Do you feel the point of my poniard?"

"Yes, monsieur; oh! have pity on me."

"The blade is sharp," replied Gabriel, calmly; "listen, Yvounet; Martin will pass before you, and I will remain behind—if you do not follow him I swear to heaven that you shall not fall, for I will pin you to the wall with my poniard, and we will all pass over your body."

"Oh! pity, monsieur, and I will obey," said Yvounet, who was cured by a still stronger fear.

"Martin, pass on," said Gabriel.

Martin advanced as he had seen his master do and soon found himself in front, and advanced bravely, followed by Yvounet.

"Pardieu," thought Martin, "my master has found a sovereign cure for giddiness."

As his head began to appear above the wall a voice asked,—

"Is it you?"

"Yes."

"It was time, for the third round will pass in five minutes."

"Good, we will receive them," and he stepped up.

"What is your name?" asked the man, trying to distinguish him in the darkness.

"Martin Guerre."

He had scarcely uttered the words when Pierre Pequoy—for it was he—gave him a furious push which precipitated him into the abyss. He uttered a despair-

ing cry as he fell—happily without striking his companions.

Yvounet now arrived at the top, and after him Gabriel and the others, but they met with no resistance.

“What madness has possessed you?” cried Gabriel, seizing Pierre by the arm. “What had Martin done to you?”

“To me nothing, but to Babette——”

“Oh! I had forgotten. But poor Martin—it was not him—can we not save him?”

“Save him after a fall of two hundred and fifty feet on to the rocks?” cried Pierre, with a hoarse laugh. “Come! M. d’Exmès, you had better think of saving yourself and your companions.”

“Yes, my companions—my father and Diana,” murmured Gabriel, “but my poor Martin——”

“This is no time to lament the guilty,” replied Pierre.

“Guilty! he was innocent. I will prove it to you. But you are right—this is not the time. Are you still disposed to serve us?”

“I am devoted to France and to you.”

“Then what must we do now?”

“The round is about to pass and you must seize and gag the four men who compose it—but here they are.”

As he spoke the patrol appeared. If they had given an alarm all might have been lost, but before they had time to utter a cry they were thrown down, bound, and gagged.

“Now, monsieur,” said Pierre, “we must make sure of the other sentinels, and then descend boldly to the guard-room. We have two posts to carry, but you need not fear being overwhelmed by numbers, for more than half the city guard, gained over by Jean and myself, are ready to help you. I will go down first and inform them of your success, while you seize the sentinels.”

“Ah! how I should thank you, Pierre, but for this

death of Martin Guerre; and yet this crime was a justice in your eyes."

"Once more, leave that to God and my conscience. Attend now to your share of the work to be done, as I will to mine."

Many of the sentinels were favorable to the French, and the few who resisted were soon disarmed. Pierre soon returned, bringing Jean and other friends, and thus reinforced they descended boldly to the guard-room. Most of the men were asleep in their beds and were easily taken, and the tumult, for it was not a combat, only lasted a few minutes. Before six o'clock struck the whole fort belonged to the French; all who resisted were secured, but large numbers surrounded and hailed Gabriel as a deliverer. Thus was carried in less than an hour, this fort which the English had so imperfectly garrisoned, thinking it inaccessible from the sea, and which nevertheless was the key to Calais. All had been so well and quickly managed, that the fort had been surprised and the new sentinels placed before any alarm had reached the city.

"Now, monsieur," said Pierre, "I advise you to retain one-half of our men here to guard the fort, while I go with the rest into Calais itself, where I think I can aid you."

"Yes, you could aid me, if I attempt a sortie."

"Do not risk that on any account, monsieur; you are not strong enough for it, and if you assume the offensive, Lord Wentworth may retake the fort?"

"But am I to remain idle here, while the Duc de Guise and his men risk their lives?"

"Their lives are their own, and this fort belongs to France. However, when I think that one last effort is all that is needed to wrest Calais from the English, I will rise with all the inhabitants I can collect, and then you may hazard

a sortie. So give me back the horn I gave to you. When, at the foot of Risbank, you hear its sound, come out without fear and share our triumph."

Gabriel thanked Pierre and they divided their men. By the time their arrangements were completed it was half-past seven. Gabriel then ascended the fort to superintend the hoisting of the French standard. When this was done he approached with hesitation the place where poor Martin Guerre, the victim of so fatal a mistake, had been thrown over. He looked down, expecting to see the mutilated body of his faithful squire on the rocks, but to his surprise he saw him bent double, suspended about half-way down the tower; a leaden waterspout had broken his fall, and on this he was hanging.

Gabriel believed him dead, but he wished his body to be brought up. One of the men who had become attached to Martin, volunteered to make the attempt; he descended the ladder, and after many efforts succeeded in bringing up the body. The surgeon declared that he was still alive, and indeed he soon began to awaken to consciousness and suffering, for he had an arm and a leg broken.

CHAPTER LIII.

LORD WENTWORTH AT BAY.

A LITTLE before eight o'clock the Duc de Guise, although with little hope, arrived with a small suite at the point indicated by Gabriel. At the first glance he uttered a cry of joy, for he recognized the standard of France floating over the tower.

"My brave Gabriel!" he cried, "he has really performed this prodigy. Now we shall have, thanks to him, leisure to prepare for and assure the capture of Calais.

Let the succors from England come, Gabriel will receive them."

"Monseigneur, it seems they come at your call," said one of his suite, who had been looking seawards with a telescope. "Are not those English sails in the distance?"

"Let me see. Yes, it is really them. Diable, they have lost no time. If we had commenced the attack we should have been done for. Now we shall see how the new governor of Risbank will behave towards them."

When the English vessels came within sight of the fort, the appearance of the French flag struck the crews as if they had seen a specter, and to confirm the apparition, Gabriel saluted them with several discharges of cannon. In spite of their expedition the reinforcements had come too late. After some minutes of hesitation, the English fleet turned round and went back to Dover; they had brought force enough to defend Calais, but not to retake it.

This event produced a double effect. While the Duc de Guise rubbed his hands with joy, Lord Wentworth was in despair. After an anxious and restless night, he had fallen asleep towards morning, and was only coming out of his room, when Pierre Peuquoy and a body of men, pretending to have been driven vanquished from the fort of Risbank, brought the fatal news into the city. In his rage and grief he could hardly credit the tidings, and ordered that the chief of the fugitives should be brought before him. Pierre was accordingly introduced, who told a long tale how 300 men, aided no doubt by treachery which he could not fathom, had scaled the tower and surprised them.

"And who commanded these three hundred men?"

"Mon Dieu! your old prisoner, the Vicomte d'Exmès."

"Oh!" cried Lord Wentworth, with anger. He had some suspicions of Pierre, but did not feel strong enough

to let them appear. He therefore dismissed him with friendly words. Left alone, he fell into a sad and profound reverie, for which there was good reason. The city, with its feeble garrison, deprived of all hope of assistance, could not hold out above a few days—perhaps a few hours.

“Never mind,” said he, pale with rage and grief; “they shall buy their victory dearly; I will hold out to the last. And as to this lover of Diana’s,” an infernal smile passing over his face, “I will endeavor that he shall not be able to rejoice too much in his victory.”

We are not going to describe in detail the siege of Calais. The 5th and 6th were passed in immense efforts on both sides, but those of Lord Wentworth were everywhere anticipated and counteracted, and Marshal Strozzi seemed to divine all his intentions and means of defense, as though the walls were transparent.

However, the idleness to which he was condemned distressed Gabriel. After making his rounds with great vigilance, he generally came to sit by Martin’s bedside. The brave squire endured his sufferings with admirable patience and equanimity. What astonished and irritated him was the conduct of Pierre Peuquoy with regard to him. The naïveté of his surprise and surmises would have dissipated any fears which Gabriel might have retained, so he disclosed to Martin what he conceived to be the truth, and that a knave had profited by his wonderful resemblance to him, to commit all sorts of crimes under his name.

This revelation Gabriel made in the presence of Jean Peuquoy, who was much distressed at hearing it. He was also very much annoyed about the wretch who had caused all these misfortunes. Martin, also, though his mind was somewhat relieved, was frightened at the idea of this man who had already done him so much injury.

"However," he said, "at all events, if I lose my leg it will serve to distinguish me from that impostor."

On the evening of the 6th, Gabriel thought that he could distinguish a greater tumult in the city; the French had, in fact, after a fierce struggle, made themselves masters of the old castle. The 7th passed in desperate efforts on the part of the English to retake it, but the Duc de Guise repulsed them all, and it was evident that another day would see Calais in possession of the French.

About half-past three in the afternoon, Lord Wentworth, who had fought furiously all day, said to Lord Derby, "How long do you think we can hold out?"

"Not more than three hours, I fear."

"Will you answer for two?"

"Yes, unless some unforeseen event occurs."

"Then I entrust you with the command of the city. If in two hours, we should not have succeeded in repulsing the attack of the enemy, I wish you to capitulate."

"I will, my lord, but on what conditions?"

"The best you can make—but none for me. You will bear witness in England that I have done my best, and that we held out to the last moment. Adieu! Derby." So saying, he withdrew, giving strict orders that he should not be followed.

CHAPTER LIV.

DISDAINED LOVE.

LORD WENTWORTH reckoned confidently on two things—that he should have two good hours uninterrupted, and that he should find his house empty, as he had sent all his people to assist in repelling the assaults of the English. Diana would be alone with her women.

All was, indeed, deserted in his house, when Lord Went-

worth, haggard and wild with despair, entered abruptly into Diana's room.

"Go," said he to the attendant, "the French will be masters here to-night, and I can protect you no longer. Go home to your father, that is your proper place."

"My lord——"

"Do you not hear what I say?" cried he stamping his foot. "Go at once; I desire all the others to do the same."

"But, my lord——" said Diana.

"Madam, I will have it," interrupted Lord Wentworth. The attendant, terrified, withdrew.

"Is this news true, my lord?" asked Diana.

"Yes, madam; they have taken the forts St. Agatha, Nieullay, Risbank, and the old castle, and Calais is their own. Do you rejoice?"

"Oh! my lord, I can hardly feel certain of it yet—I still doubt."

"Do you not see, madam," cried Lord Wentworth, "that I have deserted my friends that I would not be present at our defeat? In an hour and a half Lord Derby will capitulate. In an hour and a half the French will enter triumphantly into Calais, and the Vicomte d'Exmès with them. You may rejoice."

"My lord, you speak in such a tone, that I scarcely know whether to believe you or not."

"Then, madam, to convince you, I repeat that in an hour and a half the French will enter here, and Vicomte d'Exmès with them. Tremble, madam."

"What do you mean?" cried Diana, turning pale.

"What! am I not sufficiently clear? In an hour our parts will be changed; you will be free, and I a prisoner. The Vicomte d'Exmès will come to restore you to liberty and love, and to throw me into some prison. Tremble!"

"Why then should I tremble?" cried Diana, drawing back, terrified at his fiery glance,

"It is easy to understand, madam," said he, advancing, "for I am still master for one hour."

"My lord! my lord!" cried Diana, "what do you want of me? Do not approach me, or I will cry out for help."

"Cry for help if you please; the house is empty, and the streets are deserted. No one will come near you for an hour. I am so certain of it that I have not even locked the doors."

"But in an hour hence, when they come, I will denounce you, and they will kill you."

"No," replied he, coldly; "it is I who will kill myself. Do you think I will survive the loss of Calais? But time enough for that. Now I will satisfy at once my love and my revenge."

"And I will escape thus," cried she, drawing a knife from her bosom.

But before she had time to strike, Lord Wentworth seized her little hands, tore the knife from her, and said, "Not yet, you may do what you please if you prefer dying with me to living with him."

He held her in his arms, but she sank on her knees, crying, "Pity, my lord, for your mother's sake. Remember, you are a gentleman."

"I am nothing but a man who is about to avenge himself and die," he replied, raising her in his arms. But at that moment a great tumult was heard outside, the door was thrown open, and the Vicomte d'Exmès, together with Pierre and Jean Peuquoy and several French archers appeared.

Gabriel bounded, sword in hand, towards Lord Wentworth, exclaiming, "Wretch!"

Lord Wentworth, gnashing his teeth, quitted his hold of Diana, and seized his sword which lay on a chair.

"Back," cried Gabriel to his friends, "I wish to chastise this man alone."

The two adversaries, without another word, crossed their swords. Diana had fainted.

We know already how it happened that assistance came sooner than Lord Wentworth had thought possible. Pierre Pequoy, according to his promise, had armed all those who were secretly attached to the French party, and scarcely had Lord Wentworth quitted the ramparts, when the sound of Pierre's horn had summoned Gabriel, who, joining quickly with his party, had appeared with his men at the breach. Lord Derby, seeing that further resistance was impossible, send a herald to the Duc de Guise to ask for terms.

Gabriel, who had remarked the absence of Lord Wentworth with uneasiness, set off immediately for his house, as we have seen. All the doors were open, and he had entered without difficulty.

After the combat had lasted a few minutes, Lord Wentworth's sword flew from his hand, and, in endeavoring to regain it, he slipped and fell. Gabriel, full of rage, put his foot upon his breast, and was about to kill him, when Diana, who had just opened her eyes, cried feebly, "Mercy."

At the sound of her loved voice, Gabriel's rage evaporated. "Do you wish him to live, Diana?" he asked.

"Yes, Gabriel, give him time to repent."

"So be it; let the angel save the demon." Then, with his foot still on his chest, he told the archers to come and bind him and take him to prison, until the Duc de Guise should decide his fate.

"No, kill me rather!" cried Lord Wentworth.

"Do as I tell you," said Gabriel.

He was quickly obeyed, and Lord Wentworth carried off. When Diana was alone with Gabriel, she fell on her knees, crying, "I thank thee, O God, for having saved me, and through him."

CHAPTER LV.

LOVE RETURNED.

THEN Diana threw herself into Gabriel's arms and cried, "And you, Gabriel, I must also bless and thank you."

"Oh, Diana, what I have suffered since I last saw you, and how long that is!"

"And I also."

Then each began to relate what had happened to them during their long separation. Calais, the Duc de Guise, the vanquished and the victors, all were forgotten.

"Ah, Gabriel," said Diana, at last, "this moment, which reunites us so happily, I have often dreamed of and pictured in my captivity—it always seemed to me that my deliverance would come through you—that it would be you whom God would lead to my help."

"It was the thought of you, Diana, which drew me towards you like a loadstone, and guided me like a star. I must confess it to you and to my conscience, that, though moved by so many other powerful motives, I never should have conceived the idea of taking Calais, and carried it out by the rashest means, if you had not been a prisoner here. I trust that God will not punish me for having done good from interested motives." As he spoke, he thought of the Rue St. Jacques, and of what he had heard there, that a pure cause ought to be supported by pure hands.

But the loved voice of Diana somewhat reassured him. "God punish you, Gabriel! You, so good and generous."

"Who knows?" said he, with a sigh.

"I do," replied Diana, with her charming smile.

"Diana, you are as beautiful as an angel."

"And you as brave as a hero, Gabriel." They were sitting side by side, their hands clasped together, and as Diana spoke, she laid her head on his shoulder.

"Diana, I love you!" cried Gabriel, and their lips met in a long kiss. But suddenly he started up, and cried, "Diana, let me fly!"

"Fly! and for what reason?"

"Diana, Diana, if you were my sister——"

"Your sister!" cried she, in astonishment.

Gabriel stopped and cried, "What have I said!"

"What indeed? Am I to take these terrible words for truth? What is this dreadful mystery? Am I really your sister?"

"Did I say that you were my sister?"

"But, mon Dieu, is it true?"

"No, it is not—it cannot be. I do not know—no one knows. Besides, I ought not to have told you; it was a secret which I had vowed to keep to myself. Good heavens! I have preserved my sang-froid and my reason through sufferings and misfortunes, and the first blush of happiness has made me forget all my oaths."

"Gabriel," replied Diana, gravely, "God knows that it is no vain curiosity which animates me; but you have told me too much or too little for my peace of mind. You must now tell me all."

"Impossible."

"And why impossible? This secret belongs as much to me as to you, and you have no right to keep it from me."

"You are right; but as the weight of the grief, which this secret has brought upon me, overwhelms me, do not ask to partake in it."

"Yes, I wish, I demand, I exact, I pray for it, Gabriel."

"But I swore to the king——"

"Well, preserve your oath towards strangers, even towards friends; but to me, whom you allow to have an equal right to this secret, you must not keep it. Have pity on me, Gabriel; I have been sufficiently tortured already by doubts and anxieties; and even if fate forbids us to be joined in love, let us at least have a community in sorrow; we shall each suffer less if we suffer together. Gabriel, I implore you."

"Oh! Diana, if you are absolutely determined to know this secret, I can hold out no longer. Yes, my words were true. You are perhaps the daughter of the Comte de Montgomery, and my sister."

"Holy Virgin! but how can that be?"

"I would have wished, Diana, that your pure mind should have been ignorant of this history, full of crime; but I feel myself unable much longer to fight alone against my love, and you must aid me."

Then he related to her all that he knew himself.

"It is frightful!" cried Diana. "Whatever be the issue, there must be misfortune for us in the end. If I am the daughter of the Comte de Montgomery, you are my brother; if I am the daughter of the king, your father is his justly irritated enemy."

"No, Diana, we are not absolutely without hope. As I have begun, I will tell you all."

He then related to her the strange compact into which he had entered with the king, and his solemn promise to restore liberty to the Comte de Montgomery, after he had taken a city. As he spoke, hope began to irradiate Diana's countenance.

"My poor Gabriel," said she, "there is doubtless much food for thought in all you have told me, and possibly much suffering for us in the future; but do not let us brood over this, but rather endeavor to render ourselves strong and courageous. Our suspense draws, I hope, to

a close; you have kept your engagements to the king, and I trust he will keep his towards you."

"I will now," said Gabriel, "go and claim from the Duc de Guise the letter he has promised me to the king, acknowledging my services, and then set off at once for Paris."

As he was speaking the door opened, and Jean Peuquoy entered, looking very rueful.

"What is the matter?" asked Gabriel, anxiously. "Is Martin worse?"

"No, M. le Vicomte, Martin has been carried to my house, and has been already visited by M. Paré, who says he shall be obliged to amputate the limb, but he thinks that Martin will do well afterwards."

"So far well."

"But M. Paré was forced to leave him, for a higher and more seriously wounded patient."

"Who?" cried Gabriel, turning pale; "Marshal Strozzi?—M. de Nevers?"

"M. le Duc de Guise, who is dying."

Gabriel and Diana each uttered a cry. "And I said that we were at an end of our suspense!" said she.

"God punishes me already," said Gabriel. "I took Calais for my father and for you—He wishes that I should have taken it only for France."

CHAPTER LVI.

LE BALAFRÉ.

NEVERTHELESS all hope was not extinct for Gabriel and Diana, for the duke lived still. Gabriel left immediately to go to him. On the way, Jean Peuquoy related to him how the duke, having raised his visor

when terms were asked for by Lord Derby, had been struck in the face by an English soldier, and that the head of the lance had remained in the wound. The duke, he said, had fallen without a word, but M. de Nevers had received the herald and concluded terms with Lord Derby; but, he added, even the conquest of such a city could hardly compensate to France for the loss of such a man.

“Where does he lie?”

“In the guard-room at the Château Neuf.”

An immense crowd surrounded the door of the castle, and Gabriel and Jean had much trouble to force a passage. When they reached the door, which was strongly guarded, they saw M. Paré outside, looking very sad, and Pierre Peuquoy with him.

“You here, M. Paré!” cried Gabriel. “If there be a breath of life your place is by the duke.”

“Will you tell that to these guards, who refuse me admittance in spite of my entreaties and menaces.”

“I will make a way for you.” He advanced, but was immediately stopped.

“Pardon, monsieur,” said one of the guards, “but we have received orders to let no one pass.”

“Your orders cannot concern the Vicomte d’Exmès, the friend of the Duc de Guise. Where is your commander?”

“He guards the inner door.”

“I will go to him: come, M. Paré.”

“Monsieur, you can pass if you insist on it, but he cannot.”

“You are keeping the doctor from his patient.”

“All the duke’s doctors are already there.”

“Yes; there lies the mischief,” said Paré.

“I insist upon taking in M. Paré,” said Gabriel.

"I dare not disobey orders."

"Oh!" said Paré, "the duke is dying during these discussions."

"You shall pass," cried Gabriel, drawing his sword; "let me see who will stop us."

The guards shrank from a contest with the Vicomte d'Exmès, to whom they were all so much indebted, and they let them pass. When they reached the inner door, Gabriel merely said, "I bring a new doctor to the duke," and passed without opposition. When they entered they saw the duke lying on a couch in the middle of the room; the iron of the lance had entered his face under the eye and had come out at the side under the ear. The wound was horrible to see, and the physicians were grouped around in consultation.

As Gabriel entered, one of them was saying, "Thus, after consultation, we have come to the painful conclusion that the wound of M. de Guise is mortal and that there is no hope; for to save him the lance-head must be withdrawn, and we should kill him in doing so."

"Then you prefer letting him die," said Paré, from behind.

The surgeon turned his head to see who had spoken, but not being able to discover, said, "Who would be rash enough to lay impious hands on the duke, and risk hastening his death?"

"I," said Paré, advancing.

"Oh! it is M. Ambroise Paré," said the surgeon, disdainfully; "but M. Paré forgets that he is not one of the duke's surgeons."

"Say, rather, that I am his only surgeon, since the others abandon him. Besides, M. d'Exmès can attest that the duke, a few days ago, after witnessing a successful operation that I had performed, begged me urgently to give him my aid in case of need."

"It is perfectly true," said Gabriel.

Ambroise Paré advanced to the apparently inanimate body, and examined the wound.

"Well," said the surgeon, "do you persist in your wish after examining the wound?"

"Yes."

"And what marvelous instrument do you intend to use?"

"Only my hands."

"I protest loudly," said the surgeon, "against this treatment of a dying man."

"And we also," added the others.

"Can you save him?"

"No."

"Then he belongs to me."

"We will retire," said the physicians; "we will not countenance it."

Then M. Paré took off his coat, and placed one foot on the breast of the duke.

"Take care," said the Duc de Nevers, touching M. Paré; "if you fail I cannot answer for the anger of his friends and attendants. You risk your life."

"So be it," answered he; "I am willing to risk mine to save his—but at least let all leave me quiet." Then, with his knee on the duke's breast, he took hold of the head of the lance and shook it, at first gently, then more forcibly. The duke shuddered, as if in dreadful pain.

All the bystanders were pale with terror, and Ambroise himself stopped for a second, while drops of agony covered his forehead. But he immediately returned to his work, and at the end of a minute, which seemed an hour, the iron came out of the wound. Paré threw it from him, and then bent over the wound, from the inspection of which he rose, with a face full of joy. All understood that there was hope, and many wept aloud.

Then Paré said, gravely, "Now, I answer for the life of M. de Guise."

Indeed, within an hour the duke recovered consciousness and speech. Ambroise Paré was finishing bandaging the wound, and Gabriel was standing by the couch.

"Thus, Gabriel," said the duke, at last, "to you I owe, not only the taking of Calais, but my life, since you brought M. Paré to me."

"Yes, monseigneur," said Paré, "for they would not let me approach you."

"My two saviours," said the duke.

"Pray do not talk so much, monseigneur."

"I will not; but tell me one thing."

"What is it, monseigneur?"

"Will this horrible wound affect my health or my reason?"

"No, monseigneur, I can assure you, but I fear that there will remain a scar."

"Oh! that is nothing, I shall not much mind being called Le Balafré."

We know that this was the title by which the duke was known to posterity.

CHAPTER LVII.

PARTIAL DÉNOUEMENT.

ON the following day, the 8th of January, a family council was taking place in the house of Pierre Peuquoy around the bed of Martin Guerre, whose leg had been amputated by M. Paré, and who was now doing well.

To paint the remorse which Pierre experienced on learning the truth is impossible, and he was constantly beseeching Martin to accept all that he possessed. The

honest armorer was, however, somewhat calmer than before, for, if Martin was married, the real culprit might not be, and reparation might still be possible. Jean, on the contrary, was more sad, and Babette appeared much cast down.

Jean and Pierre had just returned from the duke, who had sent for them to thank them for the part they had taken in the siege. "Yes, sister," said Pierre, "after M. d'Exmès had, in terms far too flattering, explained to the Duc de Guise how we had contributed to this glorious result, this great man thanked us with a grace and a goodness which I shall never forget. But above all he rejoiced me by adding that he desired to be useful to us in his turn, and asking what he could do for us. Now, sister, as soon as I have found him who has so injured us, I will ask M. de Guise to assist us to force him to do you justice." Babette began to cry. "What is the matter, Babette?" continued he.

"I am very unhappy," sobbed she.

"But it seems to me that your prospects brighten."

"On the contrary, they grow darker."

"No, be easy; all will go well. Your lover will return to you—you will be his wife."

"But if I refuse to marry him?"

Jean Peuquoy made a movement of joy which did not escape Gabriel.

"Refuse him!" cried Pierre, in astonishment; "but you loved him."

"I loved," said Babette, "he who suffered, who seemed to love me, who showed me respect and tenderness. But he who deceived me, and lied to me—who abandoned me—I hate and despise."

"But if he married you?"

"He would marry me only because he was obliged to do so, or because he would hope for the protection of the

duke. If he gave me his name, it would be either from fear or cupidity. I will have nothing to do with him."

"Babette," replied her brother, severely, "you have no longer the right to say, 'I will have nothing to do with him.'"

"My dear brother, have pity, and do not force me to marry a man, whom you yourself call a miserable wretch."

"Babette, think of your reputation."

"I would rather have to blush for my faults than for my husband."

"Then, Babette, you will not attend to my wishes?"

"I implore your affection and your pity, brother."

"And I answer you with grief, but with firmness. It is necessary, above all things, that you should live esteemed by others, and by yourself. I prefer you unhappy, to dishonored; and I, your brother and the head of your family, insist that you marry this man, and I will use my authority to force you to do so."

"You condemn me to death, brother," said Babette, "but I resign myself, as a punishment for my fault, since no one intercedes for me."

Jean, at this appeal, could restrain himself no longer—"Who should intercede for you," cried he, bitterly, "when what your brother asks is so just and wise? He thinks only of the honor of the family, and to save this, he wishes to make you marry an impostor. It is true that this wretch, once received into our family, will dishonor it; and it is certain that M. d'Exmès will not fail to demand from him a severe account, for the infamous manner in which he has persecuted Martin Guerre, and that you, as his wife, may be dragged into court as a witness, you may die of shame as a wife, but never mind, you will have done your duty."

"Jean," said Pierre, "I hardly recognize you, who are generally so calm and moderate."

"It is because I am so that I see better than you the consequences of this step."

"I know, Jean, that the situation is difficult, but it is not of my making. But have you, who object to it, a better plan?"

"Yes, doubtless."

"What is it?" cried Pierre and Babette, eagerly.

"It is," said Jean, "to find some honest man who, more touched than frightened at Babette's misfortune, will consent to give her his name."

Pierre shook his head incredulously, and said, "We cannot hope for that. Such a man must either be in love or act from base motives; and in any case we do not desire to spread our search among strangers."

Jean replied, with an emotion which he could not conceal, "Well, Pierre, if some one loved Babette—if he had learned at once her fault and her repentance, and was ready to forget the past in order to assure to himself a happy future—if this were so, what would you say, Pierre? What would you say, Babette?"

"Oh! that cannot be. It is a dream," said she.

"Do you know such a man, Jean?" asked Pierre; "or is it not, as Babette says, a dream?"

Jean looked earnestly at Babette, who stood with downcast eyes, then he said, "Alas! Pierre, I fear it is but a dream; for to realize it, it is necessary, not only that Babette should be loved, but that she should love a little, or else she would be still unhappy; for he that would thus wish to assure his happiness would probably be neither young, nor handsome, nor amiable enough to induce Babette to become his wife."

"Yes, it was a dream," replied Babette, sadly; "but not, my cousin, for the reasons you mention. The man generous enough to take compassion on me thus, were he the most morose and withered, would seem young to me,

for his action would show a freshness of heart. I should find him handsome, for such sentiments must leave a noble stamp upon the countenance ; and I should find him amiable, for he would have given me the greatest proof of love that a woman can receive. My duty and my joy would be to love him all my life, and with all my heart. But," she added, with a sigh, "it is impossible to find such a man as you have pictured, more especially for a poor girl without beauty. There might be some one generous enough to think of it, and that is much ; but on reflection he would doubt, and draw back. It is, indeed, only a dream."

"But what if it be true?" said Gabriel, rising.

"True! What do you mean?"

"I say, Babette, that this generous man exists. I know him, and he loves you deeply and truly, with an affection which loves to protect and to pardon. Thus you may, without hesitation, accept his offer, which is inspired by sincere pity and true devotion. Besides, you will give as much as you will receive, Babette ; you will receive honor, but you will bestow happiness, for he who loves you is alone and isolated in the world—without joys and without interest—and you would bring him both, Babette. Is it not so, Jean?"

"But, M. le Vicomte," stammered Jean, "I do not know——"

"True, Jean ; you do not know that Babette has for him who loves her a profound esteem and great tenderness. She has vaguely penetrated this love, with happiness and hope ; and it is since this that she has conceived so violent an aversion for the wretch who deceived her. This is why she just now prayed her brother not to marry her to him, whom she thought she loved, when she only pitied him, and whom she now hates. Am I not right, Babette?"

"Really, monsieur, I do not know," said she, pale as death.

"What! are you both ignorant of your own sentiment? Is it I who am first to reveal to you, Babette, that Jean loves you; and to you, Jean, that you are loved by Babette?"

"Is it possible?" cried Pierre, joyfully.

Babette and Jean looked at each other for an instant; then, almost without knowing how, they were locked in each other's arms.

Pierre was too much overcome to utter a word, but he pressed Jean's hand with an eloquent grasp, while Martin Guerre clapped his hands joyfully.

CHAPTER LVIII.

HAPPY AUSPICES.

As Gabriel was to leave the same day for Paris, he went to take leave of the Duc de Guise. . He was compelled to leave Martin behind, Ambroise Paré having declared that his recovery would be slow, and that he would require the greatest care.

"Here you are, my ambitious young friend," said the duke as he entered.

"All my ambition has been to second you to the best of my ability, monseigneur."

"Oh! I speak now of the exorbitant demands that you have recently addressed to me, and which I do not know how to satisfy. Just listen to them, M. de Vaudemont. Firstly, M. d'Exmès asks me to take with me to Paris, but meanwhile to employ them as I wish, the little troop of men that he enrolled for himself, these men being no other than the incarnate devils who scaled the fort of Risbank with him. Who do you think confers the favor here?"

"I must confess it to be M. d'Exmès," said M. de Vaudemont.

"And, ma foi, I accept this new obligation willingly, and I will not spoil them by idleness. As soon as I am able, I will lead them to Havre, for I do not intend to leave the English a foot of ground in France. The second demand of M. d'Exmès is that I should remember that Madame de Castro, the daughter of the king, is in this town, where she was brought a prisoner, and to extend my protection to her. I have already given instructions on this point; and, although I am a bad courtier, I am enough of a gentleman to be anxious to pay every respect to Madame de Castro, who will be conveyed to Paris whenever she pleases by a suitable escort."

Gabriel bowed his thanks, fearing to show by words the interest he took in this subject.

"Thirdly, Lord Wentworth being the prisoner of M. d'Exmès, we had agreed to admit him to ransom, but the vicomte prays us to send him free to England."

"But, monseigneur," said Gabriel, "will you permit me to remind you of the promise that you made to me in my tent, the night before the capture of Risbank?"

"Wait, impatient young man," said the duke. "After the three eminent services I have rendered to you, surely I have the right to ask one of you. I ask you, then, since you are going so soon to Paris, to take and present to the king the keys of Calais."

"Oh! monseigneur!" cried Gabriel, joyfully.

"That will not trouble you, I hope. Besides, you are used to this sort of commission. You took charge of the flags captured in our Italian campaign. You can also take to his majesty a copy of the terms of the capitulation, and this letter announcing our success, which I wrote this morning, in spite of M. Paré; but no one else could have rendered you full justice. I trust you will be content

with me, and—afterwards with the king. Here are the keys and the letter.”

“Monseigneur, I am yours for life or death,” cried Gabriel.

He took the little box and the letter which the duke held out to him. They were precious talismans which might restore him to his father and to happiness.

“And now,” said the duke, “I dare say you are impatient to set out; and I experience, I confess, a degree of fatigue which imperatively calls for some hours of repose.”

“Adieu, then, and once more, many thanks, monseigneur.”

At this moment a gentleman entered with an agitated look.

“What is the matter, M. de Phermés?” asked the duke.

“Monseigneur, Lord Wentworth, to whom, by your orders, I went to restore his sword, received the news coldly and without a word. I left him astonished, when a cry summoned me back. Lord Wentworth had passed through his body the sword I had just returned to him. He died immediately.”

“It is the despair consequent upon his defeat which has driven him to it,” cried the duke. “It is a real misfortune.”

When Gabriel left the duke, he proceeded to the governor’s house, where Diana still was. He had not seen her since the night before, but she had heard of the recovery of the duke, and he found her calm and resigned. She was rejoiced at the duke’s letter and commissions, and they talked long over their hopes and prospects.

As it grew late and it was time for him to depart; “Go, then, Gabriel,” said she; “go, that our lot may be quickly decided.”

“Thanks for your courage, which sustains mine, dear Diana.”

"Stay an instant, Gabriel; besides this letter from the duke, you shall also take one from me, which I have written to the king, telling him how you have delivered and saved me. Thus it will be clear to him and to all, that you have restored a city to France, and a daughter to her father. I speak thus, for I believe my instincts do not deceive me, and that he is really my father."

"May you speak truly, dear Diana!"

"I envy you, Gabriel, for you will be the first to know our destiny. However, I shall soon follow you, for, as M. de Guise is so kind, I shall ask leave to set off to-morrow morning, and although I shall travel more slowly, you will not be in Paris many days before me."

"Oh, yes! Diana, come quickly, your presence must bring me happiness."

"And as you are forced to leave behind you your faithful squire, I wish you to take with you the French page whom Lord Wentworth gave to me. André is but seventeen, but he is devoted and loyal, and he will be to you, in some degree, a souvenir of me."

"Thanks, dear Diana, but I must set off at once."

"He will join you before you are out of Calais."

"I accept gladly, then; he will be some one to whom I can speak of you."

"So I thought," replied she, blushing, "but now we must say adieu."

"Oh, no! Let us rather say, au revoir."

"Alas! when and how shall we meet again? If the enigma of our fate be decided unhappily, it would be better to meet no more."

"Do not say so, Diana. Besides, who is to tell you, if not I?"

"Oh, mon Dieu! I could not bear to hear misfortune from your lips."

"What shall I do, then?"

Diana drew a ring from her finger ; then she took from a chest the veil she had worn in the convent at St. Quentin, and then said solemnly, "As it is probable, Gabriel, that all will be decided before my return, send André to meet me on the road. If all is well, send by him this ring to the Comtesse de Montgomery ; if not, let him give this veil to Sister Benie."

"Diana, you are an angel."

They exchanged a silent embrace—then Diana cried, "Au revoir, Gabriel, either in this world or the next."

"Au revoir," cried he, in a stifled voice, and he rushed hastily from the room. Half an hour afterwards he was on his road, accompanied by André and four other men. He had hope, for all seemed now favorable to him. He had done a great deal, and he still seemed to hear Diana's soft voice whispering hope and encouragement in his ear—her ring was on his finger, and the blue sky and bright sun all seemed to speak of hope ; and he hoped.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE VICOMTE DE MONTGOMERY.

ON the 12th of January, 1558, there was a brilliant assemblage of nobles and ladies at the Louvre. Nevertheless, the king was absent and unquiet, for he was most anxious about the result of the expedition to Calais, and had often blamed himself for having allowed the duke to undertake it. Suddenly an usher entered, and, bowing before the king, announced loudly that an officer, sent by M. de Guise from Calais, requested the favor of an interview with his majesty.

"From Calais !" cried the king, joyfully ; "let him enter immediately."

We need scarcely say that every voice was hushed, and that all looked anxiously towards the door. In the midst of this silence Gabriel entered, followed by his four men bearing the English flags. Gabriel himself carried the keys of Calais and the two letters on a velvet cushion. At this sight, the face of Henry the Second expressed a mixture of joy and terror. He comprehended the happy message, but he feared the messenger.

"Vicomte d'Exmès!" murmured he.

The constable and Diana de Poitiers exchanged a glance of alarm; however, Gabriel, solemn and firm, advanced, and, kneeling before the king, said, "Sire, I present to you the keys of Calais, which, after a siege of seven days and three desperate assaults, was surrendered by the English to M. de Guise, and which his grace hastens to present to your majesty."

"Calais is ours?" asked the king.

"Yes, sire."

"Vive le roi!" cried all the company.

Henri, who forgot all but these marvelous triumphs of his arms, looked round with a radiant countenance. "Thanks, gentlemen, thanks," said he; "I accept, in the name of France, these acclamations, but they should not be addressed to me alone—it is only just that the best part be bestowed on the valiant chief of the enterprise—M. de Guise."

Murmurs of approbation welcomed this speech.

"And in the absence of our dear cousin," continued the king, "we are happy to be able to offer our felicitations to you, his brother, M. le Cardinal de Lorraine, and to you, M. d'Exmès, whom he has charged with this glorious announcement."

"Sire," said Gabriel respectfully but boldly, "excuse me, but I am no longer the Vicomte d'Exmès."

"How?" cried Henri, frowning.

“Sire, since the taking of Calais, I thought I might assume my true name—the Vicomte de Montgomery.”

The sound of this name, which had not been heard in that assembly for so long a time, occasioned a universal exclamation of surprise. And as this young man called himself the Vicomte de Montgomery, the Comte de Montgomery must be still alive. What could it mean?

The king turned white, and his lips trembled with anger and impatience. “What does this mean, monsieur, and whence comes this boldness?”

“It is my true name, sire; and what your majesty calls boldness, is only confidence.”

“Your private affairs can come later, monsieur; but it seems to me that you have not fulfilled your mission.”

“It is true, sire, I have to present to your majesty these flags taken from the English, and this letter written by M. de Guise himself.”

The king took the letter, broke the seals, and, turning to the cardinal, said, “You, M. de Lorraine, shall have the pleasure of reading aloud this letter from your brother.”

Charles de Lorraine bowed, thanked the king, and read—

“Sire, Calais is ours; we have retaken in a week a city that cost the English a year’s siege, two hundred years ago. Guines and Ham, the last two places which they possess in France, cannot now hold out long, and I can promise your majesty that very shortly our hereditary enemies will be driven out of your kingdom. I have thought it best to be generous to the vanquished, and have permitted all who wished it to retire to England, as it might have been dangerous to leave in a city so recently taken so large an element of revolt. Owing to the rapidity with which the place was taken, the number of our own killed and wounded is not large. However, time and

leisure fail me to give details. Wounded seriously myself——”

The cardinal stopped and turned pale.

“What ! the duke wounded ?” cried the king.

“Your majesty and your eminence may reassure yourselves. The wound of M. de Guise will have no bad consequences, thank God. Little now remains except a scar in the face and the name of *Le Balafré*.”

The cardinal read on—“Wounded seriously myself the day of our entrance into Calais, I have been saved by the prompt assistance and great skill of a young surgeon, called *Ambroise Paré*, but I am still weak. Your majesty may learn all details from him who will bring you this letter, together with the keys of Calais and the English flags, and of whom, before I finish, I must speak, for it is not to me, sire, that all the honor of taking Calais belongs. I contributed with all my power and with my valiant troops, but the first idea, and ultimate success, belong wholly to M. d’Exmès. I confess I had never even thought of this bold attempt until it was proposed to me by him, who combated all my doubts and overcame my hesitation.

“But this not all—M. d’Exmès furnished Marshal Strozzi with the means of entering Calais in disguise, and of examining the means of attack and defense ; he also gave us an exact plan of the ramparts and fortifications of Calais, so that we knew them as though the walls were made of glass. Under the walls and in the assaults—at the fort of St. Agatha and before that of Nieullay—everywhere M. d’Exmès performed prodigies of valor at the head of his little troop, raised entirely at his own expense. But after the taking of Nieullay we should still have been ruined by the fort of Risbank, which, guarding the sea, would have held us at bay until succors had arrived from England ; our gigantic attempt would have failed at this

point, and yet, how, without ships, were we to take a fort which could be approached only from the sea?

"It was here, sire, that M. d'Exmès performed a miracle. After a perilous night, in a frail bark, with only his own volunteers, he gained the foot of the fort, and then, aided by communications which he had established in the city, he, by a frightful escalade, planted the French flag on that formidable tower——"

At this point, in spite of the presence of the king, a cry of admiration, that nothing could repress, broke from the assembly. The appearance of Gabriel, beautiful, firm, and yet modest, added not a little to the impression made by the recital of this exploit. The king himself was moved, and looked with a softened eye on the young hero. Only Madame de Poitiers bit her lips, and M. de Montmorency frowned.

The cardinal continued—"After the surprise of Risbank, the town was ours. The English vessels did not even dare to approach, and three days afterwards we entered Calais, seconded again by the friends of M. d'Exmès, and by his own vigorous sortie. It was in the last struggle that I received this terrible wound, which would have cost me my life, had not M. d'Exmès, almost by force, brought to my death-bed M. Paré the surgeon who saved me——"

"Oh! monsieur, in my turn I thank you," said the cardinal. Then he went on with the letter.

"Sire, generally, the glory of these great enterprises is attributed solely to the commander. M. d'Exmès is modest as great, and would willingly let his name be eclipsed by mine; nevertheless, it is but justice in me to acknowledge that without him Calais would still be in

the hands of the English. The rest belongs to you, sire, and I envy you, for it appears, from what M. d'Exmès says, you have it in your power to confer upon him a worthy recompense.

"I pray God to give your majesty a long and happy reign, and am, your majesty's obedient, humble servant and subject,

"FRANÇOIS DE LORRAINE."

When the cardinal had finished, the signs of applause were repeated. The king felt the general desire, and, giving way to it, said, "Well, monsieur, you have done great things, and I trust that, as M. de Guise says, I have it in my power to recompense you in a fitting manner."

"Sire," said Gabriel, "I desire but one thing, and your majesty knows what that is—but pardon, my mission is not yet completed."

"What is there more, then?"

"Sire, a letter from Madame de Castro."

"From Madame de Castro?" said the king, taking it with eager gladness.

The groups around dispersed, at a word from the king, to talk over the news, and Henri was soon intently reading his letter. "Dear Diana—poor Diana," murmured he. When he had finished, carried away by natural and generous feelings, he turned to Gabriel and said, "Madame de Castro also recommends to me her liberator; she says that you have not only restored her to liberty, but saved her honor."

"I did my duty, sire."

"Then it is now my turn to do mine. Tell me what you ask, M. le Vicomte de Montgomery."

CHAPTER LX.

JOY AND ANGUISH.

M. LE VICOMTE DE MONTGOMERY. At this name, which, pronounced by the king, contained in itself a promise, Gabriel trembled with pleasure. Henri was evidently going to pardon him.

"He is giving way," said Madame de Poitiers to the constable.

"Let us wait for our turn," replied he.

"Sire," said Gabriel, "I have no need to repeat to your majesty the favor I ask from your goodness and justice. What your majesty exacted, I have performed; will your majesty now grant my prayer? will you keep your promise to me?"

"Yes, monsieur, on condition of your promised silence."

"This, sire, I once more pledge my honor to preserve scrupulously."

"Approach then, monsieur."

Gabriel took a step forward, but Madame de Poitiers remained near enough to hear all that passed, although the king spoke low. This surveillance, however, did not seem to make the king waver, for he said, firmly,—

"M. le Vicomte de Montgomery, you are a valiant man, whom I esteem and honor; when you shall have obtained what you ask, and which you have so well earned, we shall not certainly have sufficiently recompensed you; however, take this ring, and to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, present it to the Governor of the Châtelet. He shall be apprised before that time, and will be ready to deliver up to you the object of your holy and worthy ambition."

Gabriel fell at the feet of the king, and cried, with his eyes full of tears, "Ah! sire, all the energy and determination which I possess, and of which I have, perhaps, given some proofs, are for the rest of my life devoted to your majesty, as they would have been, I confess, instruments of my hatred if you had refused my prayer."

"Really," said the king, smiling.

"Yes, sire, I confess that I should have extended my vengeance even to your majesty's children, as now I will defend and love you and them. Before God, who sooner or later punishes those who break their oaths, I will keep my oath of fidelity, as I would have done that of vengeance."

"Rise," said the king, still smiling, "calm yourself, and recount to me the particulars of the siege of Calais."

Henri kept Gabriel for more than an hour, talking to him on this subject. Then the cardinal, who knew little of Gabriel's antecedents, would absolutely present him to the queen, but meanwhile he saw with terror, that Diana de Poitiers had approached the king, and was speaking in a low voice with her wicked smile. She seemed to be insisting on something, against which he appeared to be remonstrating. She then called the constable, who also talked earnestly to the king. Gabriel saw all this from a distance, and suffered a martyrdom; but while he was thus tormented, he was gaily accosted by the Queen Dauphine, Marie Stuart, who overwhelmed him with compliments and questions.

Gabriel, in spite of his disquietude, replied with as much composure as possible,—

"It is magnificent!" cried Marie, enthusiastically; "is it not true, François?" said she, addressing her young husband, who readily joined his praises to those of his wife.

"To merit so much kindness, what would one not do?"

said Gabriel, whose eyes still sought the group round the king.

"When I felt myself attracted to you, by I know not what sympathy," continued Marie Stuart, with her accustomed grace, "my heart warned me, doubtless, that you would furnish this glorious triumph to the fame of my dear uncle. Would that I had, like the king, the power of recompensing you. But all that I have just now to give is this little bouquet of violets, which the gardener, des Tournelles, sent to me this morning, as a rarity, after the late frosts. Flowers are generally offered as a token of joy, or as a consolation to the unhappy—to you, happy and triumphant, I offer them as a tribute. Will you accept them?"

"Oh! madam," said he, kissing her hand, "I accept them gladly, but," he added with a sigh, "who knows that the triumphant conqueror may not soon need consolation?" for he had remarked that the king spoke no longer, but only listened. When the young queen left him, Admiral Coligny accosted him in his turn, with felicitations on the brilliant manner in which he had acted at Calais.

"I only trust," added he, "that we may never meet as enemies."

"I trust not; but what do you mean?"

"Why, they have burnt alive four of our party," said Coligny, "and the reformed, who every day grow in number and in power, will soon be wearied of these odious persecutions, and then the two parties may form two armies."

"Well?"

"Well, M. d'Exmès, in spite of our promenade together in the Rue St. Jacques, you kept your liberty, and engaged yourself to nothing, and I fear you are now too much in favor not to join the king against the heretics, as they call us."

"I believe you are wrong," answered Gabriel, in a whisper, whose eyes still sought the king. "I fear, on the contrary, that I may soon have the right to march with the oppressed against the oppressors."

"What do you mean, Gabriel?—what is the matter? You turn pale—you seem troubled."

"Nothing, admiral, but I must leave you; I will see you again soon."

Gabriel had just seen a sign of acquiescence from the king, and looks of triumph on the faces of Madame de Poitiers and M. de Montmorency. Nevertheless, when, some minutes after, the reception was over, and Gabriel went to take leave of the king, he said, "Sire, till to-morrow."

"Till to-morrow, monsieur," answered the king, but he turned away his head and smiled no more.

Gabriel retired with terror in his heart. All the evening he wandered round the Châtelet, and regained courage a little by not seeing M. de Montmorency come out. Then he recalled the king's clear promise—"The object of your holy and worthy ambition shall be given to you,"—and he hoped again.

CHAPTER LXI.

PRECAUTIONS.

WHAT Gabriel thought and suffered during those hours God only knows, for on returning to his own house he did not even speak of it to his nurse, and from that moment he began that concentrated and silent life, rife in action but sparing in words, which he rigidly continued ever after. Thus faded hopes, energetic resolutions, projects of love and of vengeance—all that in that night of

suspense Gabriel had felt and sworn to himself—all remained a profound secret between himself and his own heart.

At eight o'clock he was to present himself at the Châtelet with the ring which was to open the doors to himself and to his father. At six o'clock he came down equipped for a long journey, having collected all the gold in his house; he then called André, his page, and said to him—

“André, I have some grave commissions to execute which I must entrust to you who replace to me my faithful squire—Martin Guerre.”

“I am at your orders, monsieur.”

“Then listen attentively. In an hour I shall leave this house, alone: if I return soon you will have nothing to do, or rather, I will give you fresh orders. But it is possible that I may not return to-day, nor yet to-morrow—perhaps not for a long time.”

“Pardon, monsieur, but do you mean that I shall not see you for a long time?”

“It is possible.”

“Because Madame de Castro, before my departure, gave me a letter for you, monsieur.”

“And you never gave it to me!”

“I was only to give to you, monsieur, on your return from the Louvre, in case you were either very sad or very angry.”

“Give it me immediately,” cried Gabriel.

André gave it to his master, who retired to the window to read it. It was as follows:—

“GABRIEL,—Amidst the anguish of this last night, which may perhaps separate me from you forever, the most cruel thought which tears my heart is that you may, in the fulfilment of the great duty which you have to per-

form, find yourself brought into conflict with the king. It may be that the crime forces you on to punish him,—but, Gabriel, though I do not yet know whether he is my father, still I know that he has cherished me as his child, and the idea of your vengeance makes me tremble, the accomplishment of it would kill me. And yet, perhaps, my duty as a child may constrain me to think like you—perhaps I may feel that I ought to avenge the injuries of him who is really my father against him who has acted like one. But while this point is yet doubtful—while I am still ignorant where my love or my hatred is due, I conjure you, Gabriel—and if you have ever loved me you will obey me—to respect the person of the king.

“I reason now, if not without emotion, at least without passion, and I feel that it is not for men to take vengeance on their fellow-creatures, but that they should rather leave it to God. I pray you, then, my friend, whatever happens, to leave it to Him to punish the criminal. Believe me, He will avenge you more terribly than you can avenge yourself; and, unless He makes you his involuntary instrument—unless He uses, in spite of yourself, your hand to deal the blow, do not take the execution of his sentence upon yourself. I ask this, my friend, for my sake. Mercy is the last cry and the last prayer that you may ever receive from your

“DIANA DE CASTRO.”

Gabriel read this letter without any outward marks of emotion, beyond the sad smile which had become habitual to him. Then he said,—

“This letter does not alter what I had to say to you, André; and, therefore, if I do not return soon, and you hear nothing of me, this is what you must do. Madame de Castro will be in Paris in a few days; make inquiries, so that you may know of her arrival immediately; en-

deavor, if possible, to see her, and give her from me this packet, and tell her——”

“What, monsieur?” asked André, seeing that his master hesitated.

“Tell her only that I give her back all her promises, even that of which this veil is the pledge. Ask her to take you back into her service, that is, if you wish it; if not, come back here, and await my return.”

“Then you will really return?” cried Aloyse, with tears in her eyes. “You said, that perhaps we might see you no more.”

“That would, perhaps, be the best, good nurse; but wait quietly, and hope——”

“Hope! That will be difficult when you have disappeared.”

“But I may not disappear. And, although I have taken precautions, I hope soon to embrace you again. I commenced by telling André that all my instructions were needless if I returned.”

“God grant that you may. But have you no other instructions to leave?”

“Stay—yes, I have;” and he sat down, and wrote the following note:—

“DEAR ADMIRAL,

“I am going to be instructed in your religion, and you may count on me from to-day as one of you. Whatever be the motive which determines me, I have not the less vowed to you my heart, my sword, and my life.

“Your friend and companion,

“GABRIEL DE MONTGOMERY.”

“Send this note also if I do not return; and now, my friends, I must leave you.”

Half an hour afterwards, Gabriel with a trembling hand, knocked at the door of the Châtelet.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE SECRET PRISONER.

M. DE SALVOISIN, who had received Gabriel on his first visit, was dead, and the new governor was called M. Sageran.

When Gabriel was presented to him, his emotion was so great, that he could not utter a word, but presented the ring to him in silence.

M. de Sageran bowed gravely, and said, "I expected you, monsieur; an hour ago I received an order at the sight of this ring, to deliver to you the nameless prisoner, who has been confined here for so many years, and known only as No. 21. Is that right, monsieur?"

"Yes, yes! monsieur. And this order——?"

"I am ready to obey," replied the governor, in a tone in which a more indifferent person might have discovered a shade of sadness.

"Ah! it is true, then," he cried, "and my terrors were all foolish. Let us go quickly, I pray, monsieur."

Gabriel attempted to follow the governor, but his strong limbs almost failed him, at the almost unexpected realization of so many efforts and hopes, and he turned faint. "Pardon, monsieur," said he, to the governor, "but joy is sometimes difficult to bear."

"Pray do not apologize, monsieur," replied the governor.

Gabriel, struck this time by his sorrowful voice, raised his eyes, and looked at him. It was impossible to see a more benevolent face, or one more open and honest; yet, strange to say, the expression it bore at that moment, while he contemplated Gabriel's overflowing joy, was one

of compassion. Gabriel saw this, and struck by a sudden presentiment, turned pale; but, endeavoring to throw it off, he said, "Let us proceed, monsieur; I am ready."

They descended into the prison, preceded by a jailer, bearing a torch. Gabriel recognized at each step the somber corridors and staircases which he had before traversed. When they arrived at the door of the cell where he had seen the prisoner, he stopped, and said, "It is there." But M. de Sageran shook his head sadly, and said,—

"No, it is not there."

"How! not there?"

"No, monsieur."

"What do you mean?"

"Since last night, monsieur, I grieve to have to tell you, that the prisoner in question has been transferred to a lower cell."

"Ah!" cried Gabriel, in terror; "and why so?"

"He had been warned—you know, perhaps, monsieur, that if he uttered the least word or sound, he should immediately be transferred to a still lower cell, more dreadful and unwholesome than the one he was in. Once already he had disobeyed this order, and it was then that he was thrown into this cell, which is horrible enough."

"Well, monsieur!" cried Gabriel, impatiently.

"Last evening a man came here—a powerful person—whose name I dare not disclose."

"It does not matter."

"This person ordered me to introduce him into this cell. I accompanied him. He spoke to the prisoner several times without obtaining an answer, and I hoped that the old man would have come victoriously out of this trial; for during half an hour he kept silence, in spite of all provocations and entreaties. Unhappily, at last, at something that was said to him, the prisoner sat up, tears gushed from his eyes, and he spoke,

"And then?" asked Gabriel, in a broken voice.

"Then I was immediately required, in spite of my prayers and representations, to accomplish the barbarous sentence which had been imposed upon him; to obey an authority superior to my own, and which, had I refused, would easily have found more docile agents, and to have him removed to the cell below this."

"Oh! let us run then quickly, for I bring deliverance."

The governor shook his head sadly, but Gabriel had already begun to descend. M. de Sageran took the torch from the hand of his attendant and followed him. As they descended the air became more and more suffocating, and when they reached the bottom of the staircase, they could hardly breathe, and any one might have known that the only things which could live in such an atmosphere were the reptiles which crawled under their feet. But Gabriel did not think of all this; he took the key from the trembling hand of the governor, and, opening the heavy mouldy door, rushed into the cell. By the light of the torch he saw in a corner, on a bed of straw, a body extended; he rushed towards it, crying, "My father."

M. de Sageran trembled at this cry, for the arms and head of the old man fell powerless under the hands of Gabriel.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE COMTE DE MONTGOMERY.

GABRIEL, still on his knees, looked around him in a kind of bewilderment. Then he placed his hand on the old man's heart.

"No," said he, after a moment's pause, in a voice ter-

ribly calm, "there is no movement—the heart beats no longer, but he is still warm."

"What a vigorous nature," murmured the governor; "he might have lived a long time yet."

Gabriel stooped and closed the eyes of the dead man, then for the first and last time kissed the poor withered eyelids which had been moistened by so many tears.

"Monsieur," said the governor, who wished to distract his attention, "if the deceased was dear to you I am permitted to let you carry him away."

"Ah! truly," said Gabriel, with the same frightful calmness; "they are very just and keep their promises strictly. They had sworn to restore to me my father, but I confess that they did not swear to restore him alive." And he laughed loudly.

"Courage, monsieur," said the governor; "it is now time to say adieu to him whom you mourn. The air here is not fit for living people, and a longer stay among these miasmas might prove dangerous."

"Here is the proof," said Gabriel, pointing to the body.

"Come, then," said M. de Sageran, trying to lead the young man away.

"Yes; I will follow you; give me only one minute more."

The governor went towards the door where the air was a little better, and Gabriel kneeled down by his father's body. What then passed through his mind it is impossible to tell, but after some minutes the governor said—

"Monsieur, I pray you to come away; it is quite time."

"I am ready, monsieur." Then he kissed his father's hand once more and ascended the stairs.

"Can I do anything more for you?" asked M. de Sageran, when they reached the top.

"Monsieur, you told me that I should be permitted to

have my father buried. This evening men sent by me will come here, and if you will beforehand have the body placed in a shroud, they will take it to the family tomb of the prisoner."

"Yes, monsieur; but I must warn you that there is one condition annexed to this permission?"

"What is it?"

"That of keeping, according to some promise given, perfect silence on the subject, and of doing it secretly."

"I will do so. The men will come at night, without knowing whom they are to fetch, and shall transport the body to the family caves of the Counts of——"

"Pardon, monsieur, but I did not know the name of the prisoner while he lived, and there is no reason why I should hear it now."

"But I have nothing to hide: it is only the guilty who need concealment. However, monsieur, what you hid from me I can guess; for instance, the name of the man who visited the prisoner, and even the means which he used to make him speak."

"What! you know——"

"Yes, doubtless he said to the old man, 'your son lives,' or else 'your son has just gained a great victory,' or, perhaps, (the wretch!) 'your son is coming to deliver you.'"

The governor allowed a movement of surprise to escape him.

"And at the name of his son," continued Gabriel, "the unhappy father, who had restrained himself so well before a mortal enemy, was unable to control the impulse of his joy, and, dumb against hate, cried out through love."

The governor did not reply. "It is true, since you do not deny it," pursued Gabriel; "and as to this man's name, it is the Duc de Montmorency; I know the murderer."

“Oh ! monsieur.”

“And as for my name and that of my father, there is no reason why I should conceal it from you. I am, since the death of my father, the Comte de Montgomery. Adieu, monsieur, and thanks for your kindness.”

He saluted M. de Sageran, and left the Châtelet. Then, choosing a rather deserted spot, he wrote on his tablets this note :—“My good Aloyse, do not expect me, I shall not return to-day ; I have need of solitude, but be not anxious about me, for I shall surely return. This evening take care that every one retires early. Watch alone, and open the door to four men, who will come some time during the night ; conduct them and their sad but precious burden to the family vault, and show them a tomb in which to place the body. When all is finished, give each of them four gold crowns and dismiss them ; you may stay and pray beside the tomb, as by that of your master ; I also shall pray at the same time, but at a distance. It must be so, for I feel that the sight of this tomb would lead me to extreme and violent measures. I must take counsel of solitude and of God. Au revoir ! my good Aloyse. Recall to André his mission to Madame de Castro. May God keep you !

“GABRIEL DE M.”

This letter was finished, Gabriel sought out four workmen, to each of whom he gave four crowns in advance, and promised them as much more, to gain which they were first to carry a letter to its address, and then to present themselves at ten o'clock at the Châtelet, where they would receive from the hands of the governor a body which they were to carry to the same place as the letter.

CHAPTER LXIV.

GABRIEL'S WANDERINGS.

ANDRÉ set off as desired to execute his mission to Madame de Castro, and met her at Amiens. On seeing him, she turned deadly pale, but rallying herself, she said, "What do you bring me, André?"

"Nothing but this, madam," said he, handing her the packet containing the veil.

"Oh! it is not the ring," cried she. Then after a moment, she said, "But have you no message—no letter?"

"Only, madam, that M. d'Exmès said, 'that he restored you all your promises, even that of which this veil was a pledge.'"

"But you gave him my letter. What did he say after reading it? André, tell me everything."

"I will tell you all I can, madam, but that is not much." He then recounted to her all that Gabriel had said and done since his return, but there was nothing in it to enlighten poor Diana. She looked sadly at the black veil—the messenger and the symbol of her fate.

"Either," thought she, "Gabriel knows he is my brother, or he has lost all hope of discovering this fatal secret. I have but to choose between two misfortunes. Ah! if he had but told me all! for this doubt is worse than certainty. What shall I do? Shall I return at once and enter some convent, never to leave it again, or is it not rather my duty to return to the court to seek Gabriel, and endeavor to draw the truth from him, and to watch over the perhaps menaced life of the king, my father? My father! but is Henry the Second my father? Should I not perhaps be protecting the murderer of my father?"

But Diana was a tender and generous woman, and she said to herself, that she might perhaps repent of anger, but never of pardon; so giving way to her natural goodness, she determined to return to Paris, and, until she should have some certain news of Gabriel's intentions, to remain near the king as a safeguard and protection to him. Gabriel himself, even, might have need of her intercession, and when she had saved those she loved from each other, it would be time enough to take refuge in a convent.

Three days afterwards, therefore, she arrived at the Louvre, where Henri welcomed her with a fatherly joy and tenderness; but in spite of herself, she could not but receive his demonstrations with coldness, and the king, on his part, could not help feeling embarrassed in her presence. He did not dare to speak to her again of the proposed marriage with François de Montmorency, and on this point, therefore, she was tranquil. But of Gabriel she had no news; he seemed to have disappeared, although some people thought they had met him wandering about, looking somber and gloomy.

This was true; he had been met in various places, for, haunted by a terrible souvenir and still more terrible thought, he could not rest, but constantly wandered from place to place, like Orestes pursued by the Furies, and never entered a house, except from absolute necessity. Once, however, M. Paré, who had returned to Paris, saw his old acquaintance, the Vicomte d'Exmès, enter his room and sit down. Then, like a man who had come from a distant country, he questioned him about things, of which no one was ignorant; for, after inquiring about Martin Guerre and his progress, he asked about the Duc de Guise and the army.

All had gone well there, and there no longer remained to the English, as the duke had promised, a rood of land

in France. Gabriel thanked him coldly for his information, said he was glad to hear that the siege of Calais had been useful, but added,—

“It was not, however, to ask this that I came to you; but I have never forgotten your words which moved me so much under that humble roof in the Rue St. Jacques. You have now definitively joined the reformed religion?”

“Yes, monsieur; my correspondence with Calvin completely dissipated my few remaining doubts, and I am now thoroughly convinced.”

“Well, monsieur, will you instruct a neophyte, who is anxious to learn? I speak of myself.”

“Willingly, M. d’Exmès.”

They conversed for many hours; Paré, ardent and eloquent; Gabriel, sad and docile. At last he rose and pressed the surgeon’s hand—“Thanks,” said he; “this conversation has done me great good. The time has not yet come when I can openly join your ranks; but I am now convinced that yours is the right path, and we shall meet again.”

In the beginning of the following month, May, 1588, Gabriel reappeared in his own house; to which Martin Guerre had returned about a fortnight. Aloyse received him with delight, and would have questioned him as to what had become of him, and what his plans now were, but Gabriel imposed silence upon her. He remained with them all day; but towards evening he rose, and said, “Now I must leave you.” Then turning towards Martin,—“My brave Martin,” said he, “I have been occupying myself about you in my travels, and, unknown myself, I have made inquiries, and believe I have found traces of the wretch who has imposed upon us both.”

“Oh! monsieur.”

“Yes, I believe I am now on the right track; but you must help me. Set off next week for your own home,

but do not go there direct ; be at Lyons a month from to-day ; I will join you there, and we will act in concert."

"I will obey, monsieur ; but shall I not join you earlier?"

"No, I must be alone now. Adieu, my good friends ; and remember, Martin, a month hence at Lyons."

CHAPTER LXV.

WHERE WE MEET AGAIN ARNOLD DU THILL.

Six weeks after, on the 15th of June, in the village of Artigues, near Rieux, a man, who to judge by his boots, must have walked a long way, was sitting on a wooden bench, holding out his feet to a woman who was unlacing his boots.

"Have you nearly finished, Bertrande?" cried he ; "you are so slow and awkward that you put me out of all patience."

"I have done, Martin," replied she, gently.

"Oh!" grumbled the pretended Martin, "where are my other shoes? I dare say you never thought of bringing them with you, and I must sit here with bare feet while you fetch them."

Bertrande ran into the house, and quickly returned with them. She had been marvelously softened down, and brought to submission.

"And my glass of wine—where is it?" asked he.

"It is ready, husband, and I will fetch it."

"Always to wait," cried he, impatiently. "Be quick! or else——" and an expressive movement of his stick finished the speech.

He drank it off, and then seemed rather better tempered. "You are very warm," said she.

"Well," replied Arnold, "I have been running about,

according to the stupid fashion of this country, to invite all the neighbors on our wedding-day. I had really forgotten it, until you reminded me of it, yesterday."

"Yes, Martin, it is troublesome; but it is the custom, and one must conform to it."

"And have you done your part? is the table ready?"

"Yes, Martin."

"And did you go to the judge?"

"Yes, Martin, and he will come if he can."

"If he can! He must come; you have managed it badly; you knew I was anxious to have him here, but you do not care to please me. His presence would be the only thing to console me for the useless fuss of this ridiculous anniversary."

"Ridiculous anniversary! our wedding-day!" cried Bertrande, with tears in her eyes. "Ah! Martin, you have traveled a great deal, and learned many things, and you may despise the old ways of the country; but this anniversary recalls to me a time, when you were less severe, and more tender to your poor wife."

"Yes," said Arnold, with a sardonic laugh, "and when my wife was less sweet and gentle to me; when she forgot herself sometimes, even so far as to——"

"Oh! Martin, do not recall these things, which make me blush, and which now I can hardly understand."

"And I, when I think that I was fool enough to bear it. But never mind, my character has changed since that time, and yours also, I confess. Thus, now all goes smoothly."

"That is true, thank God."

"Now, Bertrande, return, at once to the judge, and if you do not extract a promise from him to come, I shall hold you responsible."

Bertrande went, and Arnold's eyes followed her with a satisfied look. As he sat there, a man leaning on a stick,

and seeming to walk with difficulty, came up to him, and said, "Pardon me, but is there in this village, I pray you, any inn where I may rest and refresh myself?"

"No, indeed, you must go to Rieux for that, two leagues off."

"Two leagues more! and I am dropping with fatigue: I would give a pistole with pleasure for a dinner and a bed."

"A pistole!" cried Arnold, always eager for money; "well, my good man, I can, if you wish it, give you a bed in a corner, and as to dinner, we keep an anniversary to-day, at which an additional guest would not matter. Will that suit you?"

"Oh! yes; for I am ready to drop with hunger and fatigue."

"Well, then, it is settled; for a pistole you said."

"Here it is in advance."

As Arnold rose to take it, he for the first time removed his large hat, when the stranger suddenly called out in surprise, "My nephew, Arnold du Thill!"

Arnold turned pale, but said, "I do not know you; who are you?"

"You do not recognize me, Arnold? Your old uncle, Carbon Barreau, to whom you have given so much trouble, as, indeed, you have to all your family?"

"Ma foi, no."

"What! you deny me, and yourself. You did not make your mother—my poor sister—die of grief when you abandoned her, a helpless widow, ten years ago, at Sagias? Ah! I know you well."

"I do not know what you are talking of," replied Arnold, impudently; "I am not called Arnold, but Martin Guerre; and I am not from Sagias, but from Artigues. All the people here will testify it. Ask my wife and my relations."

"Your wife and your relations? Can I be mistaken—such a resemblance!"

"After ten years it is difficult to remember; but you will soon see my real uncles and relations."

"Well, you are wonderfully like him; it is no compliment, however, for he was the greatest rogue possible. I dare say he is hanged by this time. Ah! I am glad I have no children who might, like him, have desolated my life and dishonored my name."

"Oh!" thought Arnold, "it is true; my uncle Carbon had no children—no heirs." Then he said, aloud, "Nevertheless, you might be glad to have a son now, or even, failing that, your rogue of a nephew, who would at all events be one of your family to whom you might leave your money."

"My money?"

"Certainly; you, who give pistoles so readily, cannot be poor. Pardieu, I am sorry I am not your nephew."

"Yes, Arnold, if he be not hanged, will be my heir; but he will not get much by it, for, in spite of my offering a pistole when I am tired, my purse is very light."

"Hum!" said Arnold, incredulously.

"You do not believe me; but it is not the less true that I am going to Lyons, where M. le Maire has offered me an asylum and bread for the rest of my life. He sent me twenty-five pistoles to pay my little debts and my traveling expenses—the generous man."

"There, that will do," interrupted Arnold, rudely; "I have no time to listen to your chattering. Give me your pistole—you shall dine and sleep, and we shall be quits."

"It was you who questioned me," answered the old man, as he followed Arnold into the house.

The guests began to arrive, and the judge, whom Arnold wished so much to conciliate, occupied the place of

honor. Carbon Barreau had many proofs that his host was called Martin Guerre.

"Do you remember, Martin Guerre," said one, "the Augustine monk, Father Chrysostom, who taught us both?"

"I recollect him perfectly," replied Arnold.

"Since you have so good a memory, perhaps you can remember me?" cried a voice from behind the guests.

CHAPTER LXVI.

JUSTICE EMBARRASSED.

HE who spoke thus, in an imperious tone, threw off his brown cloak and large hat, and the guests, who had all turned round, saw a young and handsome cavalier, richly dressed.

"M. le Vicomte d'Exmès!" cried Arnold, turning as pale as death.

"Ah! you recognize me!"

Arnold, after a moment's hesitation, had calculated his chances, and taken his part. "Doubtless," said he, "I recognize M. le Vicomte d'Exmès from having seen him at the Louvre and elsewhere; but I wonder that he should recognize me, an obscure squire of the Constable Montmorency."

"You forget that you have also been mine."

"I! Monsieur is making a mistake."

"I am so certain I am right, that I require the judge of Artigues, now present, to arrest you on the spot."

All looked terrified, save Arnold himself, who preserved his composure. "May I know of what crime I am accused?" said he.

"I accuse you of having wickedly passed yourself off for my squire, Martin Guerre—of having stolen from him his name, his honor, and his wife, by means of your wonderful resemblance to him."

At this accusation all the guests looked at each other in stupid amazement. "What can it mean?" they cried. "Martin Guerre, not Martin Guerre!"

Arnold turned towards her whom he called his wife, and said, "Bertrande, speak; am I your husband, or not?"

She had hitherto sat, with a bewildered look, but at the sound of his voice she threw herself into his arms, and cried out, "Dear Martin Guerre!"

This impressed every one, and murmurs began to arise against the Vicomte d'Exmès.

"Monsieur," said Arnold, "against this testimony of my wife, and all my relations here present, do you still persist?"

"Yes, I persist in my accusation."

"One moment," cried Carbon Barreau. "I knew I could not be wrong; and I now affirm that this man is the image of my nephew Arnold du Thill, a native of Sagias, like myself."

"Ah! here is a providential support," said Gabriel. "Do you, monsieur, recognize your nephew in this man?"

"I cannot say whether it be him or the other one, but I am sure that if there be an imposture, it is on my nephew's side, for he is so clever at it."

"You hear, M. le Juge?"

"But where is the man who pretends I have wronged him? Why does he not appear, and confront me?"

"Martin Guerre, my squire, is according to my desire, a prisoner at Rieux. M. le Juge, I am the Comte de Montgomery, formerly captain in his Majesty's Guards. The accused himself recognized me. I require you to

arrest and imprison this man like his accuser. When they shall both be in the hands of justice, I trust to be able easily to show on which side is the imposture."

"Let it be so. Martin Guerre, I arrest you."

"I will not give in," cried Arnold, "sure as I am of my innocence. My dear friends, I may count on your testimony; may I not?"

"Yes, yes, Martin, be easy." As for Bertrande, she had fainted.

Eight days afterwards, the trial took place—a curious and difficult one assuredly. If Gabriel had not appeared at it, the judges of Rieux and Artigues would certainly never have been able to decide it. The prisoners were interrogated separately, and kept apart. Martin Guerre, wrapped in a cloak, was led to his wife, to Carbon Barreau, and to all the rest, and all recognized him. But they did the same for Arnold in his turn, and every one was bewildered. Both told nearly the same story, and Arnold showed letters from Bertrande, family papers, and a ring known to all; but Martin related how he had been hanged at Noyon and all his things stolen. The judges were utterly perplexed.

The President asked each, separately, this question. "Where did you pass your time from your twelfth to your sixteenth year?"

Each replied, "At St. Sebastian, in Biscay, with my cousin Sanxi."

Sanxi was there, and witnessed to the truth of this. Gabriel approached and whispered in his ear. Sanxi laughed and spoke to Arnold in the Basque language. Arnold turned pale, and did not answer.

"How," said Gabriel, "you passed four years at St. Sebastian, and do not understand the patois?"

"I have forgotten it," murmured Arnold.

Martin, when subjected to the same trial, answered

readily, to the great joy of his cousin, and to the enlightenment of the judges, who, for the first time, began to get a clue. This test was followed by another. All the inhabitants of Artigues remembered his skill at tennis; but since his return, he had always refused to play, under the pretext of having hurt his right hand. The true Martin, on the contrary, declared his willingness to exhibit his skill before the judges, which he did while still sitting and wrapped in his cloak, while a man brought back the balls which he threw with marvelous dexterity.

Henceforth the feeling was in favor of Martin. An odd circumstance completed his triumph. Gabriel had remarked that Martin's foot—now, alas! his only one—was smaller than that of his rival, and the old shoemaker of Artigues was summoned, who brought with him his new and old measures.

"It is true," said he, "his shoes are much larger than they used to be, but I thought that it might be the effect of long traveling."

The Martin triumphantly showed his foot, which corresponded exactly with the old measure. There seemed to be no longer a doubt as to the guilt of Arnold; and Gabriel then produced the peasant to whom Arnold had given the strange commission to go to Paris and announce the hanging of Martin Guerre at Noyon. Bertrande was also called again, and asked if she had not discovered a change in the character of her husband since his return.

"Oh! yes, gentlemen," she replied, "but to his advantage. Formerly, Martin was too weak and good-natured, he let himself be scolded to any extent; now he has returned my master—it is he who orders, and I who obey. He has shown me that I was wrong, and has taught me submission."

Several of the inhabitants also testified that the old Martin was quiet, inoffensive, and pious; while the new

one was quarrelsome and irreligious, a change which they had attributed to his soldier's life.

Gabriel then recounted the whole history of the strange circumstances under which he had had both in turn in his service; how he had long been unable to account for the varying character of his squire, until he had at last arrived at the truth, and he finished by demanding the punishment of the one and the release of the other.

Arnold was present, although Martin was not, and when Gabriel had finished, he asked leave to say a few words.

He spoke well. "He did not pretend," he said, "to explain all these mysteries; all he had to do was to explain his own life and actions, which he was ready to do." This he did fully and circumstantially. "He could no longer," he added, "speak the Basque language, nor play at tennis; but every one had not a good memory for languages," and he showed the wound in his hand. And what was more easy than for his adversary to have learned a language and a game? Lastly, the Comte de Montgomery, misled by his rival, had accused him of having stolen the papers which proved his birth and identity, but he had no proof of this to offer; as for the peasant, he doubtless was an accomplice of the soi-disant Martin. And with reference to the charge of having stolen the ransom of the count, he had, it was true, returned to Artigues with money, but with more than that—and he explained the origin of his wealth by exhibiting the certificate of M. de Montmorency, to whom he referred them.

In fine, his impudence resembled innocence so much that Gabriel saw the judges again becoming undecided. It was necessary to strike a decisive blow, and Gabriel determined upon it. He, therefore, spoke to the president, who ordered Arnold to be removed and Martin to be brought in.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE MISTAKES SEEM LIKELY TO RECOMMENCE.

ARNOLD was not immediately reconducted to prison, but was placed for a time in an adjoining room. Left to his own reflections, he congratulated himself on the effect of his speech, but still he could not but fear that he had but postponed the evil day, and that the truth must come out at last.

When they came to reconvey him to the prison he noticed that his ordinary jailer was not present; and, still more strange, that the cell in which he was placed was not the one he had previously occupied. This one had a barred window and a high chimney-piece, which the other had not. However, everything attested the recent presence of a prisoner—the remains of a loaf, a half-emptied bottle of water, a bed, and a chest with clothes in it.

Arnold, who was accustomed to restrain himself, said nothing; but when he was alone he examined the chest. There were only clothes in it, but they were of a color and shape that he thought he recognized, especially a brown and yellow suit which was rather uncommon. “Oh!” thought he, “it would be strange.”

Towards evening the jailer entered. “Holà, Martin,” said he, clapping him on the shoulder, “your affairs go well. Whom do you think has begged for, and obtained, permission to visit you?”

“Ma foi! how should I know?”

“Your wife, who doubtless begins to see where the truth lies. But it is rather late, when to-day or to-morrow, sentence will be pronounced in your favor.”

“Well, I will see her—let her come in.”

In a few minutes the jailer returned with Bertrande,

and informed them that a quarter of an hour was all that was allowed.

She advanced, full of shame and with a downcast look, towards the pretended Martin, who remained quiet, and left her to speak.

"Oh! Martin," cried she, in a timid voice, "can you ever forgive me?"

"Forgive you? for what?"

"For my gross mistake. I certainly ought to have recognized you; but if I was deceived, so was every one else. I confess that to convince me of my error it was necessary for the Comte de Montgomery, and all the judges, to assure me that you were my real husband, and that the other was an impostor."

"Which do you call the impostor? He who came with M. de Montgomery, or the other who has so long been called Martin Guerre, and possessed his property?"

"Oh! he is the impostor who has deceived me so long, and whom last week I called my husband, blind that I was."

"Then it is settled now?" cried Arnold, with emotion.

"Mon Dieu! yes, Martin; the judges and your worthy master announced to me just now, that there was no longer a doubt that you were my true husband."

"Ah! really," cried he, turning pale.

"Yes; and they advised me to come and ask your pardon, and seek a reconciliation with you at once. It is true, my dear Martin, that I have been very guilty towards you, but I entreat you to remember that it was involuntarily. How could I suppose that there should be two people so exactly alike, not only in face but in figure; not, however, in character or in heart, I admit, and this perhaps should have warned me. But there was nothing to put me on my guard. Arnold du Thill talked to me of many past things—he had your ring and your papers, and no one suspected such a fraud. I attributed your

change of temper to long traveling and experience in the world ; and reflect, my dear husband, that it was you whom I loved and obeyed under the guise of this stranger."

She stopped to see if he would answer and encourage her a little, but as he maintained an obstinate silence, she continued, with a sinking heart, "You doubtless think that if I was deceived when you were absent, I should at least have known you when you returned. But consider that Arnold du Thill was in possession of your name and place, and that I was naturally unwilling at first to admit a doubt, which would render me guilty. Besides, they would hardly let me see or speak to you, and you were always wrapped in a long cloak ; and I never saw you both together. What could I do, and how could I decide ? The judges assure me that I have been deceived, that they have full proof of it, and I return to you repentant and ashamed, trusting to your goodness and your old affection. Am I wrong to count on your indulgence ?"

He was still silent, and she went on, "I am no longer the disdainful, passionate, and unreasonable woman who made you suffer so much. The bad treatment which I have received from this man has, at least, had the effect of making me docile, and you will find me so for the future ; and you will be kind and good to me, as you used to be, will you not ? You will pardon me, and I shall recognize your heart, as I now recognize your features."

"You do recognize me then, at last ?"

"Oh ! yes."

"You recognize me," persisted he, "not for the intriguer who audaciously called himself your husband, but for the real Martin Guerre, your first and true husband ?"

"Yes, doubtless."

"And by what signs do you recognize me ?"

"Alas ! not by your person, I admit ; for were you by the side of Arnold du Thill, and both dressed alike, I

might mistake you again. I only recognize you because they told me they were bringing me to my real husband, and because you occupy this cell, and not that of Arnold."

"Miserable Arnold; and you, foolish and credulous woman!"

"Yes, reproach me; and when you have said it out, you will be good and indulgent, I know."

"Well, Bertrande, do not despair, we shall see."

"Ah! I see you are my good Martin," and she kissed his hands with delight.

"Good," thought Arnold; "you shall pay for this some day;" but, pretending to be softened, he kissed her and affected to wipe away a tear.

"What happiness!" cried she.

At this moment the door opened, and the jailer reappeared. "Reconciled already?" said he. "I knew how it would be; you were always too indulgent, Martin."

"What! you reproach him with his goodness?"

"Oh! that is his business; but now you must leave—the time is up."

"What! already?"

"Oh! to-morrow you will be together again."

"That is true. Free to-morrow; then we will resume our former happy life."

Bertrande kissed Arnold's hand once more, and left the prison.

"Can I not have a light?" he called out.

"Certainly, as usual, till nine o'clock. Dame, you are better treated than Arnold du Thill, but then your master is so generous."

As soon as Arnold was alone he took off his clothes, put on the brown and yellow suit which was in the chest, and then burned his own. "Well," thought he, "I have been condemned by the judges, but it seems to me that I shall come well out of it after all."

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE SPEECH OF THE PRISONER AGAINST HIMSELF.

ARNOLD did not sleep much, but employed himself in revolving his plans and chances. The project that he had conceived of again substituting himself for poor Martin was bold, no doubt, but ought to succeed by its very boldness.

About eight in the morning his door opened, and the Comte de Montgomery entered. Arnold certainly trembled, but he remained in appearance quite firm.

“Good morning, Martin,” said Gabriel.

Arnold breathed again. Gabriel had looked him full in the face and had called him Martin; his disguise was, therefore, perfect, and he was saved. “Good morning, my dear master,” said he.

“The sentence will probably be pronounced this morning, Martin.”

“At last! Heaven be praised. There is no longer any doubt or fear, monsieur—is there? The truth will surely triumph.”

“I trust so, but this Arnold has adopted a desperate measure.”

“Really! what is he about now?”

“It is scarcely credible; he is still playing the old game.”

“Is it possible?” cried Arnold; “but how?”

“Why, he has the impudence to assert that yesterday, after the trial, the jailers made a mistake and took him to your cell, and you to his.”

“Is it possible? And on what does he found this insolent assertion?”

"He declares that neither of you having been removed at once to the prison, the jailers made a mistake and took you to the cell where he has hitherto been confined. And they say that he raves and weeps and asks to see me."

"And have you seen him, monsieur?"

"No, indeed; I fear his cunning tricks. Still I pity him, for he is a clever rogue, and after all he has killed no one, and yet he will doubtless be hanged. The punishment seems to me too heavy for his offense; we might, if you wished it, ask for mercy for him."

"Mercy for him!"

"It requires some reflection, I am aware, but think of it, Martin."

"No," replied Arnold, after a moment's hesitation; "no pity for him."

"I did not know you were so implacable, Martin; you did not speak so yesterday."

"Yesterday he had not tried this last trick."

"That is true. Then your wish is that he should die?"

"Mon Dieu, monsieur, you know that my nature is averse to bloodshed and violence. I am grieved to think of such a cruel necessity—but still it is a necessity. Consider, monsieur, that while this man lives my existence can never be tranquil—this last attempt shows that he is incorrigible. From prison he would escape, and from exile he would return, and I should always be unquiet and tormented. My wife and my friends would never be quite certain that I was the true Martin Guerre, and would be perpetually suspicious. I must therefore do violence to my nature, monsieur, and force myself to be unyielding."

"So be it, then. If he be condemned, for the sentence is not yet pronounced——"

"Then it is not yet certain?"

"Certain, no—but probable, although that rascal

Arnold made a very subtle and persuasive speech to the judges yesterday——”

“Fool that I was,” thought Arnold.

“While you, Martin,” continued Gabriel, “who now speak so well to me, could then find nothing to say; you were embarrassed and almost mute, in spite of my remonstrances.”

“It is, monsieur, because I am at ease in your presence, but am intimidated before the judges. Besides, I confess I relied on my good cause and thought that justice would do better for me than I could do for myself; but I see words are best when you are dealing with lawyers. Ah! if I had but my chance over again!”

“What would you do, Martin?”

“Oh! I would speak, and reduce to nothing all the arguments of Arnold du Thill.”

“That would not be easy.”

“Pardon me, monsieur; I saw all his weak points clearly enough, and had I been less timid could have shown them to the judges.”

“Why, what could you have said?”

Arnold, in reply, began to refute his own speech from beginning to end, and with marvelous clearness showed the double lives of the two men. He would, in our days, have made a most distinguished advocate, but he had the misfortune to come into the world three hundred years too soon.

“I think this would have convinced the judges,” said he, when he had finished. “I wish they had heard it.”

“They have heard it,” said Gabriel.

“How?”

“Look.”

The door opened, and Arnold saw, to his great surprise, the president and two judges seated outside.

“What does this mean?” cried Arnold.

"It means that, knowing the timidity of my poor Martin, I wished his judges to hear him without his knowledge."

"Oh!" cried Arnold, quite reassured, "I thank you, monsieur." Then, turning towards the judges, "May I hope," said he, "that my words have established the truth of my cause?"

"Yes," said the president; "they are convincing."

"Ah!"

"But other proofs, not less convincing, convince us that there was a mistake yesterday, and that you, Arnold du Thill, were taken to Martin's cell, and he to yours."

"How?" stammered Arnold—"what do you say to this, monsieur?"

"I say that I knew it," replied Gabriel, with severity. "I repeat to you, Arnold, that I wished you yourself to establish the innocence of Martin and your own guilt. You have forced me to play a part repugnant to me."

"Then you have laid a plot; but take care, monsieur, it is your own Martin whom you are now abandoning."

"Do not persist, Arnold du Thill," said the president; "the error was effected by the order of the tribunal, and you have hopelessly convicted yourself."

"But since you state that there was an error, who assures you, monsieur, that there was not one also in the execution of your orders?"

"The testimony of the guards and your jailers."

"They are wrong; I am really Martin Guerre, the squire of M. de Montgomery, and I will not allow myself to be condemned in this manner. Confront us both, and then decide if you dare. As if there was not already sufficient confusion in this case, you have introduced more. I will declare to the last that I am Martin Guerre and no other."

The judges and Gabriel smiled gravely at this im-

pudent obstinacy. "Once more, Arnold du Thill," said the president, "there is no confusion possible between you and Martin Guerre."

"And how so?—what distinguishes us?"

"You are about to know," said Gabriel, who made a sign, at which Martin appeared at the door—Martin without his cloak—Martin with his wooden leg.

"Martin, my brave squire," said Gabriel to Arnold, "escaped from the gibbet which you had prepared for him at Noyon, but could not at Calais escape a punishment destined as a retribution for one of your infamies. He was precipitated instead of you over a precipice, and lost his leg, which, by a Providence, kind when it seemed to be cruel, now establishes the difference between you."

Arnold, pale and thunderstruck, could defend himself no longer, but only murmured, "I am lost."

CHAPTER LXIX.

JUSTICE.

HALF an hour after, the accused was called to hear his sentence, in which, after setting forth that he was fully convicted of imposture, forgery, thieving, and adultery, he was condemned to kneel in the open street before the church at Artigues, with bare head and feet, and thus publicly to ask pardon of Martin Guerre and Bertrande his wife, and when this was done, he was to be delivered over to the executioner, to be led by him before the house of Martin, where he was to be hanged upon a gibbet, and his body afterwards burned.

Arnold received his sentence with a sad but submissive air, confessed his faults and professed penitence. Martin gave a new proof of his identity, by bursting into

tears at the words of his persecutor. He even conquered his timidity so far as to ask the president if there was no way of obtaining pardon for Arnold. But he said that no one could grant it but the king, and that the crimes had been so glaring that he would certainly refuse.

Martin, as he could not obtain pardon for Arnold, opened his arms to his repentant and happy wife. She had no need to repeat all the prayers and arguments which she had employed with Arnold; he stopped her with a kiss, and led her joyfully home.

Eight days after, Arnold paid the penalty of his crimes, and it must be confessed that he showed a degree of courage in his last moments.

After the lapse of some weeks, as Martin sat at his door calm and happy, a cavalier approached him so gently that he did not hear his footsteps, and touched him on the shoulder.

"What! is it you, monsieur?" he cried; "pardon me, I did not see you."

"Do not excuse yourself, Martin, I came to see your happiness, not to disturb it. You are happy?"

"As a bird in the air, or a fish in the water. I have, perhaps, run enough about the world, taken part in a sufficient number of battles, and watched and fasted enough to give me the right to enjoy idleness and ease for a time. As for abundance, I find this house rich—and too rich. This money does not belong to me and I will not touch it. The greater part of it belongs to you, monsieur—it was your ransom. I have it here, ready to return it to you. As for the rest, I know not where it comes from, but it would soil my fingers, and I shall give it to the poor."

"But I fear that you will not then be very well off, Martin."

"Oh! yes, monsieur. I could not have served so long

under such a generous master, without saving something. I brought a good sum with me from Paris—besides, Bertrande's friends are well off, and she has had some money left to her."

"Well, Martin, you will not refuse from me, what you would not take from Arnold. This money, which you say is mine, I give it to you."

"How! monsieur; a present of such value to me!"

"This will not repay your devotion to me, Martin; I shall still be your debtor. And your wife, Martin—does she behave better to you than formerly, or does she still torment you? Will she drive you away a second time?"

"Oh! no, monsieur; she attaches me only too much to this place; she is so good to me—she is all kindness, and as I am not of a tyrannical disposition, we get on excellently together."

"Then you are quite happy; it is all I wished to know, and I can now go in peace."

"Go, already, monsieur!"

"Yes, Martin, there is nothing here to detain me."

"That is true; when do you set out?"

"This evening."

"And you gave me no notice, but I will soon be ready."

"What?"

"Bertrande! Bertrande!"

"Why do you call your wife?"

"To help me to get ready to go, monsieur."

"It is needless, Martin; you do not go with me."

"What! you do not take me with you?"

"No; I go alone."

"Not to return?"

"Not for a long time, at all events."

"Are you then dissatisfied with me?"

"No, Martin, you are the most faithful and devoted of followers."

"Then why not take me?"

"I have three good reasons."

"May I ask what they are?"

"First, it would be cruel to take you from a happiness that you have so recently gained, and from your well-earned repose——"

"Oh, as for that, it is my duty, and I could abandon everything for you."

"Yes, but I will not abuse your zeal. Secondly, the unfortunate accident at Calais prevents you, my poor Martin, from rendering active services to me."

"It is true, monsieur, that I can no longer fight at your side, nor follow you on horseback, but you doubtless have frequently confidential messages to perform, in which I would do my best, and might be useful to you."

"I know it, Martin, and perhaps I might be selfish enough to accept, if it were not for the third reason. I have no longer a glorious fight to maintain for France, but a solemn vengeance to pursue, through silent paths, in which I follow blindly—only as an instrument and not as a head—and in this you cannot aid me. So say no more, Martin. Adieu! my faithful friend, and may God protect you."

"Adieu, then, monsieur; may we meet again!"

This was all poor Martin could say through his tears.

CHAPTER LXX.

TWO LETTERS.

GABRIEL wandered about, as before, for two or three months. He then returned suddenly to his hotel, where he found Aloyse, who received him with tears, and it is impossible to paint her delight when Gabriel told her he should leave her no more. He lived in absolute solitude,

went out but seldom, and then only at night, and passed long hours beside the tomb of his father.

His constant thought was for vengeance on the king, but should this be brought through a civil war, raised on behalf of the reformed religion, or by means of a revolt to be excited to support the pretensions of his old commander, M. de Guise, to the throne of France?

Sometimes it seemed to him that the wrath of God slumbered too long, and that he would take vengeance into his own hands, when the letter from Diana, which was always next his heart, imploring him to leave vengeance to God, would again nerve his mind to patient endurance.

At last, on the 13th June, he received two letters, almost together. The first was brought to him about five o'clock in the evening by a man who would only deliver it into his own hand after comparing his face with a detailed description which he brought with him. It was as follows:—

“FRIEND AND BROTHER,—The time is come—the persecutors have raised the mask. Let us bless God—martyrdom leads to victory. Come this evening at nine o'clock to a house in the Place Maubert, No. 11, and strike at the door three distinct blows. A man will open to you and say, ‘Do not enter, you will not see clearly,’ to which you will reply, ‘I bring my light with me;’ he will then conduct you up a dark staircase, at the top of which another person will meet you and ask, ‘What do you want?’ reply, ‘What is just.’ They will then conduct you into a room where will be whispered to you the rallying word ‘Geneva’; you will respond, ‘Glory.’ You will then be led to those who need your aid. Till this evening, friend and brother, courage and discretion. Burn this note.”

Gabriel burnt the letter and sent only the answer, “I

will come." About eight o'clock, while he was thinking of this summons, a page was brought to him by Aloyse with this letter—

"MONSIEUR AND DEAR COMPANION,—I have been six weeks in Paris, as the army had no longer anything to do. I am told that you also are at home—are you like others, and have you forgotten me in these times of forgetfulness and ingratitude? No! I know you, and it is impossible. Come, then—I will wait for you to-morrow evening at ten o'clock at my lodgings at the Tournelles. Come, if it be only that we may condole with each other, on the bad use they have made of our successes. Your affectionate friend,

"FRANÇOIS DE LORRAINE."

"I will come," said Gabriel, again.

It is a matter of history, that the Constable de Montmorency, jealous of the fame of the Duc de Guise, had induced Henry the Second to sign a peace little advantageous to France, and in which one of the articles was, that Calais was to be retained by the French for eight years only, and that if it were not restored at the expiration of that time, France should pay 100,000 gold crowns to England. This, however, was never really carried into execution. This, and similar weaknesses, infuriated the Duc de Guise almost to madness, after the advantages he had gained. But it was done and there was no redress.

CHAPTER LXXI.

THE MEETING OF THE PROTESTANTS.

THE house in the Place Maubert was that of an advocate named Trouillard. It had already been vaguely supposed, in the neighborhood, to be a place of rendezvous

for the heretics, and psalms had been heard sung there, but it had not yet been visited by the police.

Gabriel followed the instructions contained in his letter, and everything took place as had been intimated. Then La Renaudie came to him and pressed his hand warmly, saying, "Do you know what passed in the parliament to-day?"

"No, I have never left the house."

"Well, you shall hear all. You are not yet pledged to us, but we have implicit confidence in you—you shall know our designs and our strength—then you shall be free to act as you please. You have said you were with us in heart, and that is enough; I do not even ask for your word not to reveal anything you hear."

"Thanks for this confidence; you shall not repent it."

"Come with me and stay by my side, and I will tell you the names of those you do not know."

He took Gabriel by the hand; pushed a secret spring, and entered into a large hall, dimly lighted and bare of furniture, except a great wooden chair for the speaker. No one remarked the entrance of Gabriel. All eyes were turned to him who then occupied the chair.

"It is the Counsellor Nicholas Duval," said La Renaudie, naming him to Gabriel, who listened eagerly to the speaker, who was stating to the assembly what had passed in the parliament.

"Our ordinary room," said Duval, "being occupied by the preparations for the fêtes to take place at the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth, we sat for the time at the Augustins. The president opened the sitting as usual, and then was resumed the question of the previous Friday, about religious opinions. Antoine Fumée, Paul Dufoix, and Eustache, spoke in favor of toleration, and their eloquent discourses seemed to make a great impression on the majority, and we were about to take the votes

when an usher opened the door, and announced the king. He entered, accompanied by the Cardinal de Lorraine and M. de Montmorency.

“All the members rose in surprise. ‘I do not come to derange your deliberations, but to aid them,’ said he. Then, after a few insignificant compliments, he finished by saying, ‘Peace is concluded with Spain, but there have been dreadful heresies introduced into this kingdom, which we must now extinguish. Why have you not passed an edict against the Lutherans, as I directed you? However, I repeat, continue your deliberations freely.’ Henri Dufoix, who had been speaking upon this courageously, began again—pleaded the cause of liberty of conscience, and even added some severe strictures on the conduct of the government.

“Henry the Second bit his lips, but kept silence. Then Dubourg rose and uttered still more serious and direct remonstrances. ‘I feel, sire,’ said he, ‘that there are certain crimes that ought to be punished without mercy—such as adultery, murder, or blasphemy—but of what do they accuse these men who are given over to the axe of the executioner? Of treason?—Never have they omitted the name of the king in their prayers.—Never have they preached treason or revolt. What! because they have discovered by the light of the Scriptures, the errors of the Romish Church—because they ask for reforms—is this a crime worthy of death?’

“The king did not move, but every one could see his anger, Le Maitre, the president, tried basely to propitiate him. ‘They are heretics,’ he said, with a feigned indignation. ‘Let us finish with them, as with the Albigenses; Philippe Augustus had six hundred of them burned in one day.’ ‘M. le President is right,’ said the king; ‘we must extirpate the heretics or they must fly; and to commence—M. de Montmorency, arrest im-

mediately those two rebels,' and he pointed to Dufoix and Dubourg. I need not tell you that the constable obeyed orders, and they were seized at once. They also afterwards arrested those who had spoken before the arrival of the king, and simply in defense of religious toleration. It is therefore certain that it was not for their opposition to the king, but for their religious opinions that they were arrested."

Nicholas Duval finished amidst the murmurs and exclamations of the assembly. Then La Renaudie spoke.

"Brethren," said he, "after what has taken place, so contrary to all justice, it is for us to determine what we shall do. Shall we still wait patiently, or shall we act? These are the questions that each must put to himself; our persecutors think of nothing less than a general massacre. Are we to sit down and wait for it, or, since law and justice are violated on the side of our enemies, shall we do justice to ourselves, and substitute force for law? Reply, friends and brothers."

The speech of La Renaudie was followed by a long silence. In spite of the indignation at the conduct of the king, with which all hearts were full, royalty still preserved too great a prestige for the reformed, young conspirators, to dare to express openly any desire for rebellion. They were resolved and devoted as a body—but each individually recoiled before the responsibility of the first step. Besides, there were in reality among them, two parties—the one desired a republic, and the other, which comprised the nobles, wished merely to exchange Henry the Second for a Calvinist king, and already spoke of the Prince de Condé.

Some time having passed in confused murmurs and painful indecision, La Renaudie turned to a little thin man with thick eyebrows and a bilious look, and said, "Well, Seguières, will you give us your sentiments?"

"Yes," replied he, with flashing eyes, "but boldly, and softening nothing, for am I not with friends?"

While Seguières was taking the chair, Renaudie whispered to Gabriel, "I resort to dangerous means. This Seguières is a fanatic, who pushes things to extremes, and provokes repulsion rather than sympathy; but it is necessary, at any risk, to know what we are to expect from our party."

The orator began abruptly: "The law itself has been violated; what appeal remains to us? that of force and no other. You ask what we must do—let this reply for me," said he, holding up a silver medal. "This medal is more eloquent than words can be. To those who cannot see what it is, I will explain the device. It is a flaming sword cutting down a lily—the scepter and the crown roll in the dust! Medals generally serve as a commemoration of the past, but let this one be prophetic of the future. I will say no more."

He descended from the chair, amidst the applause of a few, and the murmurs of the many.

"This cord does not vibrate among us, let us try another," said La Renaudie. "M. de Castelnau," said he, addressing an elegant young man who stood near him, "will you address the assembly?"

"I thought I should have had nothing to say," answered he, "but I have to reply, and I will commence like those who have preceded me. They have acted wickedly towards us—let us defend ourselves—let us return their attack in the open field. But in all else, I differ in opinion from M. de Seguières. I also have a medal to show you. It looks at a distance like an ordinary piece of money, but the head—instead of being that of Henry the Second—is that of Lodovicus the Thirteenth."

Many applauded him, but the mass remained silent and unmoved.

"What do they want?" asked Gabriel. "Nothing, I fear."

The advocate Des Avenelles now mounted the chair. "This, I believe, will prove the most popular man," said La Renaudie. "Honest and wise, but too timid—too prudent."

"We have just heard," said Avenelles, "cold and courageous words, but is the time really arrived to act upon them? Are we not going too fast? They show us a high aim, but do not point out the means, which can only be criminal. As much as any one here I have my heart torn by these persecutions, but while we still have prejudices to conquer, should we throw on our cause the odium of an assassination—yes! of an assassination—for you can obtain these ends by no other means."

Almost unanimous plaudits followed this speech. "I told you so," said La Renaudie to Gabriel.

Des Avenelles resumed, "The king is in the vigor and prime of life. To dethrone him, he must be torn down, and kings are divine, and God only has power over them. Ah! if some accident or even some private attempt were to take away the king's life, and placed the guardianship of a young king in the hands of his insolent subjects who oppress us, then it would be them and not royalty—the Guises, and not François the Second—that we should attack. Civil war would then become praiseworthy, and revolt holy, and I would be the first to cry—To arms!"

This mixture of energy and timidity pleased the assembly, and they applauded, almost unanimously, the prudent courage of Des Avenelles.

"Ah!" said La Renaudie to Gabriel, "I regret I brought you here; you will despise us. What do you then mean to do?" said he, addressing the others.

"Remain within the pale of the law," answered the

advocate. "Our friends have been arrested, but who says that they will be condemned? My opinion is, that violence on our part will only provoke the same on theirs. Our moderation may save the victims; let us have the strength of right, and let all the wrong be on the side of our enemies. Let us wait. When they see us moderate and firm, they will not be willing to provoke hostilities; and I beg you, my friends, to think twice before you hazard reprisals."

The applause was redoubled. "Let all who think with me, hold up their hands," said he.

An immense show of hands proved that he had stated the feelings of the assembly.

"Our decision is then taken," he said.

"To do nothing?" said Castelnau.

"To defer extreme measures to a more favorable time," answered Avenelles.

"Let us go," said La Renaudie. "All this irritates and exasperates me. These people can do nothing but sing."

Gabriel and his friend separated at the corner of the Pont Notre Dame. "Adieu, M. d'Exmès, I am sorry to have made you lose your time. Believe, however, that it is not the last word. Coligny and some of our best men were absent to-night."

CHAPTER LXXII.

ANOTHER TRIAL.

ALTHOUGH the Protestants failed him, there yet remained to Gabriel the ambition of the Duc de Guise. Therefore the next evening at the appointed time, he went to the appointed rendezvous. The duke received him warmly. "Here you are at last, forgetful friend,"

said he. "I was forced to seek you, or Heaven knows when I should have seen you. Why did you not come to me?"

"Monseigneur, sad preoccupations——"

"Ah! I was sure of it. They have deceived you also—have they not? They have failed in their promises to you, the saviour of France. My brother, who was present when you announced yourself as the Vicomte de Montgomery, feared you would be the victim of these people. Why did you not apply to him? He might have been of use to you in my absence."

"I thank you, monseigneur, but they strictly kept their promise to me."

"You say that in a tone——"

"I speak as I feel, but I make no complaints. Speak no more of my affairs, I pray; it is a subject which never pleases me, and it is now more painful to me than ever. I beg you, therefore, monseigneur, to desist from your kind inquiries."

The duke was struck by his mournful tone. "It is enough, my friend; I will say no more. But remember that in every place, and at all times, my credit, my fortune, and everything are yours; and if ever you have need of me, you have but to speak."

"I thank you heartily, monseigneur; and now will you speak of yourself—of your glory and your projects, which always interest me?"

"My glory! my projects! Alas! it is a sad theme."

"What do you mean, monseigneur?"

"It is true; I did think, I confess, that I had gained some reputation, and that my name would be pronounced with some respect in France, and with some terror in Europe. I dreamed also of a glorious future, and of great things for my country and myself, which I think I might have accomplished."

“Well, monseigneur?”

“But, Gabriel, during the last six weeks, since I have returned to court, I have ceased to believe in my glory, and have renounced all my projects.”

“And why?”

“Do you not know the shameful treaty which followed our victories? Had we been forced to raise the siege of Calais—had the English still the gates of France in their power—had we shown by our defeat the inferiority of our forces, and the impossibility of maintaining an equal contest, we could not have concluded a more disadvantageous treaty than that of Cateau-Cambrésis.”

“It is true, monseigneur, and every one deplores the poor results from such a magnificent harvest.”

“Then why should I continue to sow for those who reap so badly? Besides, I am condemned to inaction by this splendid treaty; my sword is fated to rust in its scabbard, and all my dreams of glory are extinguished; and this, doubtless, was the motive of their conduct.”

“But you are not the less powerful even in repose, monseigneur. The court respects you—the people adore you—and the enemy fears you.”

“Yes, I am loved and feared without, no doubt, but do not say that I am respected at the Louvre. While they have publicly cast away the certain results of my successes, they have also privately undermined my influence. Who is in favor now? That insolent Montmorency—the vanquished at St. Laurent—he whom I hate. It was by him, and for him, that this disgraceful peace was concluded. He is protected by something stronger than glory, and by some one more powerful than the king himself. My services can never equal those of Madame de Poitiers—may perdition seize her! Do you know what has been my recompense besides this treaty? The revocation of my rank as lieutenant-general of the kingdom; such an

office being, as they say, useless in time of peace ; so, without warning and without thanks, they have deprived me of this title."

"Is it possible that they have treated you so?"

"What need of ceremony towards a useful servant? But if they come again to implore—to adjure me to save the country—I will refer them to their constable ; let him save them if he can. For myself, since they condemn me to idleness, I will remain in it."

Gabriel, after a pause, replied, gravely,—“I am sorry for this determination, monseigneur, for I came to make a proposition to you.”

“What ! in time of peace?”

“Yes, monseigneur, that is what makes it practicable.”

“Really ! Is it something bold, like the siege of Calais ?”

“More so, monseigneur.”

“How ? I confess you excite my curiosity.”

“You permit me to speak ?”

“I beg you to do so.”

“Well, monseigneur, they have taken your titles from you—take them back again.”

“How ?”

“Monsieur, the people love you, and the army is your own. You are more king of France than the king himself ; and if you speak as a master, your subjects will listen. Will Henry the Second be stronger in the Louvre than you in your camp ? He who speaks to you would be happy to call you his majesty.”

“This is indeed a bold idea, Gabriel,” said the duke, but he smiled under his feigned surprise.

“I speak for the good of France ; if you were once free and master, where would your genius stop ? You would rival Charlemagne, and be to the Valois a Hugh Capet.”

"But if I were only a Constable de Bourbon?"

"Oh! monseigneur, he called strangers to his aid; you would use only your own countrymen. There are two parties to resort to."

"Which?"

"The army and the reformers. You might be a military chief, monseigneur?"

"An usurper."

"Say a conqueror. But if you prefer it, you may be the king of the Huguenots."

"And the Prince de Condé?"

"He has talent, doubtless; but you have greatness and éclat. Do you think Calvin would hesitate between you? Only say the word, and to-morrow you shall have at your disposal 30,000 reformers."

"But I am a Catholic prince."

"The religion of men like you is glory."

"I should embroil myself with Rome."

"It will be a pretext to conquer it."

"My friend, how you hate Henri II."

"As much as I love you, I confess."

"I esteem your sincerity, Gabriel, and will imitate it. I admit that I have already approached in my dreams the aim which you now point out to me. But before venturing on such a step, one must be sure of success, and to risk an attempt of this nature prematurely is to lose all."

"That is true."

"Well, do you really think the time favorable? Do you think men's minds are prepared for a change of kings?"

"They will become so."

"I doubt it; I have done much, but not enough for that. There are malcontents no doubt, but a party is not a people. Besides Henri is brave, and is the son of François I."

"Then you hesitate, monseigneur?"

"I do more, my friend, I refuse. Ah! if Henri were to die——"

"He also thinks of that," murmured Gabriel. "Well, in that case, monseigneur, what would you do?"

"Then, under a young and inexperienced king, I should be, in some sort, regent of the kingdom. I might become necessary, and then, Gabriel, your projects might be realized."

"But till then—till this improbable death——"

"I will resign myself to wait."

"This is your decision, monseigneur?"

"It is, but I thank you none the less for your wishes for me."

Gabriel took his leave, and returned home sadder than when he left.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

A DANGEROUS STEP.

DIANA DE CASTRO, on her side, lived in grief at the Louvre. She also waited, and her passive part was, perhaps, still more painful than Gabriel's. Every week, however, she sent André, who had returned to her, to ask Aloyse for news of her master. The accounts were always the same—he was silent, sad, and restless. Diana hesitated long, but, at last, one morning, she took courage, and, wrapping herself in a cloak, went, accompanied by André, to see him. Since he avoided her, since he would no longer speak to her, she must go to him.

All her courage was useless, for when she knocked with a trembling hand at his door, she was told that he was out, nor could they tell her when he would return. She dared not wait too long, lest her absence should be commented on. However, she determined to wait a little while, and asked to see Aloyse. They had not met since

the happy days at Montgomery and Vimoutiers. Therefore, Diana, on seeing her, ran to her arms, calling out, "Dear Aloyse."

Aloyse was moved to tears, "You remember me," she cried.

"Remember you! Do I remember my happy home and the Castle of Montgomery!"

"How beautiful you are!" cried Aloyse, with a smile and a sigh.

"It was not of myself that I came to speak, nurse."

"Of him, then?"

"Of what else? To you I may open my heart. How unlucky it is that he is not here. I came to console him and myself. How is he? Very sad, I fear. And why has he not been once to the Louvre to see me? What does he do? Tell me, nurse."

"Alas, madam, he is indeed sad and desolate."

"Wait, good nurse, before you begin. I must not have my absence from the Louvre remarked; so when I have been here an hour, send me away."

"I am as likely to forget time as you, madam; but we will tell some one else."

Diana then called André, and desired him to summon her at the expiration of an hour. There was much embarrassment between Diana and Aloyse, for neither knew whether the other was aware of Gabriel's sad story. However the nurse told all she knew of his habits, his sadness, and his melancholy life. Diana felt pleasure in hearing him spoken of, but felt also profound grief for his sad and wasted existence. Both started when André knocked at the door.

"What! already," cried Diana. "One word more, nurse; has he ever spoken of me?"

"Never, madam; I wish he did not think of you."

"You believe he does?"

"I am sure of it."

"Yet he avoids me."

"If he avoids the Louvre, madam, it is, perhaps, not on account of her he loves."

"I understand," thought Diana, "it is on account of him he hates." Then she said aloud, "I must see him."

"Shall I tell him to come to you at the Louvre?"

"No, no; not at the Louvre; I will watch—I will find another occasion, and will come here again."

"But if he were out again; what day—what week would it be? He would wait, you may be sure."

"Alas! poor king's daughter that I am, can I tell when I may be free? But if I can, I will send André beforehand."

At this moment the page knocked again, fearing he had not been heard.

"Adieu, nurse; embrace me once more," said Diana; "watch over him, and take care of him well."

Gabriel returned home, tired and sad as usual; but when Aloyse pronounced the name of Diana, he started up with vivacity. "What did she want—what did she say? oh! why was I not here?"

Aloyse told him what she had said.

"She wishes to see me; she has something to say to me, but she does not know when she can return? I cannot remain in this suspense; I must go to the Louvre."

"Mon Dieu! to the Louvre!"

"Yes; I am not banished from the Louvre, I suppose, and he who saved Madame de Castro at Calais, may certainly go to pay his respects to her here."

"Assuredly; but Madame de Castro herself seemed to dread your coming."

"Have I then anything to fear?" asked Gabriel, proudly.

"No, it was probably for herself that she feared."

"Her reputation would suffer far more by a secret visit to me, if it were discovered, than by a public visit from me to her, which I will make at once."

"But, monsieur, you have till now avoided the Louvre."

"I did not go to see Diana until she called for me; I avoided the Louvre when I had no motive for going there; but now she asks for me, and I will go."

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE IMPRUDENCE OF PRECAUTION.

GABRIEL penetrated to Madame de Castro's apartments at the Louvre without opposition. She was sitting embroidering with one of her women when André entered hastily.

"Here is M. d'Exmès, madam," said he.

Gabriel entered at this moment, conquering his emotion as he best could. He bowed profoundly to Diana, who dismissed by a gesture her page and her woman. When they were alone, they advanced and pressed each other's hands.

"You came to me, Diana—you wished to see me, to speak to me, and I am here."

"Was it my coming that told you I wished to see you, Gabriel? Did you not know it without that?"

"Diana," replied he, with a sad smile, "I have proved my courage elsewhere, so I need not be afraid to say that I feared to come here."

"Feared what?"

"You,—myself."

"And therefore you preferred to forget our old affection—I speak of the legitimate side of this affection," added she, quickly.

"I confess I would have forgotten it if I could, Diana, rather than come here; but I could not. Even while I avoided you, I would have given the world to see you—even for a moment. I have wandered about, hoping to catch a glimpse of you, and at your advance—prudence, duty, fear—all were forgotten; and here I am in the Louvre, and I answer all your questions, fearing that all this is dangerous and mad, and yet I do it."

"Oh! Gabriel."

"Yes, Diana, I should have been wiser had I continued to avoid you; and it would have been better, perhaps, for you also. I preferred that you should suffer from the uncertainty, rather than from the certainty of grief."

Diana began to fear that she might indeed have done better to remain in her painful state of doubt; but it was now too late. So she said, "I wished to see you, Gabriel, for two reasons—to give you an explanation, and to ask for one."

"Speak, Diana."

"I wished, firstly, to tell you why, after your message, I did not at once take the veil you sent me, and enter into a convent as I promised you at Calais."

"I sent you word by André, that I released you from that promise, and it was not a meaningless message from me."

"It was my fixed resolution to become a nun; and this intention is not changed—only adjourned."

"Why, Diana, should you renounce a world which you are so fitted to adorn?"

"Be easy on that point, Gabriel. I shall do it less to keep my promise, than to satisfy the secret desire of my soul to quit a world in which I have suffered so much. I need repose, and can only find it with God. But I would not at once accomplish this desire, for I wished to watch, and see if you complied with the request contained

in my last letter—that you do not make yourself judge and executioner. I hoped, if needful, to throw myself between those whom I love, but who hate each other, and perhaps prevent a misfortune or a crime. Do you blame me for this thought, Gabriel?”

“Do we blame the angels for their nature, Diana?”

“But oh! Gabriel, I act in the dark, and by chance; and it was as to this that I wished to question you.”

“Diana, it is a fatal curiosity.”

“Never mind; I can exist no longer in this state of terrible perplexity. Tell me, Gabriel, have you acquired the certainty that I am your sister, or have you lost all hope of discovering the truth? Tell me, I implore you.”

“I will,” said Gabriel, sadly. “I have, since I left you in Calais, accustomed myself to think of you as my sister, but the truth is that I know nothing. Only, as you say, I have lost all hope of ever knowing.”

“Mon Dieu! Then he who was to tell you had ceased to live on your return to Calais?”

“He lived still, Diana.”

“Then they did not keep their promise; and yet I heard that the king had received you so well.”

“Diana, you shall hear all—you shall share my sad secret to the end.” He then recounted all that had passed, to which Diana listened without interruption, but with a look of terror and dismay.

Her first words, when he had finished, were, with a kind of cry, “Pardon for the king.”

“Ah! you ask pardon. You deem him guilty, then; you condemn him yourself—you know he merits death.”

“Oh! Gabriel.”

“Yes; you think with me, only our natures are different. The woman asks for pardon, and the man for justice.”

At this moment some one knocked at the door, which

was immediately opened by André. "Excuse me, madam, but here is a letter from the king," said he.

Diana opened the royal letter, and read, with an increasing terror, the following:—

"MY DEAR DIANA,—They tell me that you are at home ; do not, I pray, go out till you have seen me. I am at the council, which will break up almost immediately, and on leaving it I will come direct to see you. It is so long since we have been alone, that I quite long for a tête-à-tête with my beloved daughter, and I feel sad.

"HENRI."

Diana, very pale, crushed the letter in her hand. What should she do ? send away Gabriel ?—he might meet the king on the way. If she detained him, the king would be sure to see him. A meeting of the two whom she wished to keep asunder seemed almost inevitable, and she would have brought it about.

"What does the king say to you ?" asked Gabriel, with affected calmness.

"Nothing, nothing—an order for the reception this evening."

"I disturb you, perhaps ; I will go."

"No, no ; remain. But if you have anything you wish to do, I will not keep you."

"This letter has troubled you, Diana : I fear I am in the way."

"You, my friend ! Can you think so ? Did I not go to seek you ? Alas ! imprudently, I fear. I will see you again, but not here—at your own house, as soon as I have an opportunity. I promise you. For the present, I confess, I am rather preoccupied—rather suffering."

"I see it, Diana, and I leave you," said Gabriel, sadly.

She went with him to the door. "If I keep him," thought she, "he must see the king ; but if I send him

away at once, the meeting may be avoided." Still she hesitated and trembled. "One last word, Gabriel," she said, "an important one; you have not told me what you mean to do. I cried mercy, and you cried justice; but how do you hope to obtain this justice?"

"I know nothing—I trust to God, and to opportunity."

"Oh! what do you mean? Come in again, Gabriel. You shall not go till you have explained this last word." And, taking him by the hand, she led him in again.

"If he meet the king in going," thought she, "they will be alone; but if they meet here, I shall be present." Then she said aloud, "I feel better, Gabriel; remain, and give me this explanation."

"No, Diana; you are more agitated than ever, and I begin to comprehend your terror. You fear my vengeance on the guilty, and though it terrifies, it would not astonish you; and you keep me here to prevent a meeting."

Diana trembled; but, rallying herself, she said, "Oh! Gabriel, how could you think I should have such thoughts of you? You! my Gabriel, a murderer—you strike by surprise one who could not defend himself? Impossible! it would be a cowardice. You imagine I retain you from this fear; go—I open the door for you; I am easy on this point. Leave me now—leave the Louvre in peace. I will see you soon."

She accompanied him to the ante-chamber, and then said, "Adieu, Gabriel! you force me to send you away, to prove your suspicions wrong."

"Adieu, Diana," said he, with his usual melancholy smile.

She looked after him as long as she could see him, and then, returning to her room and falling on her knees, cried, "Oh, God! watch over him, who is perhaps my brother, over him who is perhaps my father. Preserve from each other the two beings I love!"

In spite of the efforts of Diana, what she had feared took place. Gabriel went mechanically along the galleries of the Louvre, without paying much attention to external objects. All at once, however, as he entered a gallery, he shuddered, for at the opposite end a door opened and the king appeared before him, advancing alone, without arms or attendants. The injured and the injurer met for the first time since the injury had been committed. Gabriel stopped short and stood like a statue; his head reeled, and he was incapable of even forming a determination. The king also stopped, and, in spite of his undoubted courage, the feeling he experienced was nothing less than terror. Still, he would not give way to it. To call any one was to show fear—to retire was to fly; so he advanced towards Gabriel, who never moved, but laid his hand upon his sword. The king thought his last hour had come, and justly. Still he moved on as if urged by some irresistible power. In his trouble, as he approached, he put his hand to his cap and saluted Gabriel, who did not return it, but let him pass without moving or speaking.

Once passed, the king recovered himself. He said to himself that Gabriel must be coming from his daughter's apartments, but he did not dare to ask her about it, and he returned, sad and unquiet. "And yet," thought he, "this man does not want to kill me, for I offered myself to his sword and he let me pass."

CHAPTER LXXV.

PRESAGES.

THE preparations were going on for the magnificent fêtes which the king was about to give on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth to Philippe II., and of his sister Margaret to the Duke of Savoy. The

contract of the latter was to be signed on the 28th June, and Henri announced that on this and the two following days there would be open lists for tournaments and other chivalric games, and under the pretext of doing honor to the young couple, but in reality to satisfy his own passionate taste for these amusements, he declared his intention of taking part in them himself.

On the morning of the 28th the queen asked for an interview with the king, which was at once granted, and Catherine entered his room in some agitation.

"Sire," cried she, "in Heaven's name, do not go out of the Louvre until the end of this month."

"And why not, madam?"

"Because some misfortune will happen to you if you do."

"Who told you so?"

"Your star, sire."

Catherine de Medicis had already commenced those astrological studies which, if the memoirs of the time may be believed, rarely deceived her. But Henri II. was very incredulous on this point, and replied, laughing, "Oh! madam, if my star announces a danger, it will reach me as readily in here as outside."

"No, sire; it is in the open air that you are menaced."

"It is perhaps, then, a whirlwind."

"Sire, do not jest about these things; the stars are the written words of God."

"It must be confessed, then, that the divine writing is in general very obscure and unintelligible, and may be interpreted by every one according to his own idea."

"Then your majesty will go out?"

"Under other circumstances I should have been happy to have obliged you by remaining at home; but I have publicly announced that I shall appear at these fêtes, and I must do so."

"At least, sire, you will not appear in the lists?"

"Here, also, my promised word obliges me, to my regret, to refuse you. I am grateful to you for your solicitude, but I cannot but look on your fears as chimerical."

"Sire, I am accustomed to yield to your will, and I do so again to-day, although with terror in my heart."

"And you will come to the Tournelles, madam, were it only to applaud my skill and convince yourself of the groundlessness of your fears?"

"I will obey you to the end, sire."

Catherine was, in fact, present with all her ladies, except Diana, who excused herself. At the first tourney the king challenged all comers.

"Well, madam," said Henri, in the evening, "so the stars were wrong."

"Alas! the month of June is not finished," replied she.

The second day passed in the same manner, and again Henri said, with a laugh, "You see your stars were wrong again."

"I fear more than ever for to-morrow, sire."

The last day was to be the most brilliant of all. The four challengers were the king, who wore black and white, the colors of Madame de Poitiers, the Duc de Guise, Alphonse d'Este, Duc de Ferrara, and Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours. "They were," says Brantôme, "four of the best men-at-arms in all Europe."

They did marvels on that day, and no one knew to whom to give the palm. Henri was in his element, and was happy and excited. However, the evening was at last closing in, and the trumpets sounded the last course. It was the turn of M. de Guise, and he concluded amidst great applause. Then the queen rose with a sigh of relief.

"What! is it finished already?" cried the king—"and it is my turn now?"

M. de Vielleville observed to the king that as he had commenced he had had equal turns with the others.

"Oh!" replied Henri, impatiently, "if the king begins, he ought to finish."

"But, sire, there is no other assailant."

"Yes, there is; he who has kept his visor down all the time, and has not yet run. Who is he, Vielleville?"

"I do not know, sire; I had not remarked him."

"Monsieur," said Henri, advancing towards him, "you shall, if you please, break this last lance with me."

The chevalier remained for a moment without replying, and then said, in an agitated voice, "Your majesty must permit me to refuse this offer."

"Permit you to refuse! No, monsieur," said the king, angrily.

Then the unknown raised his visor, and the king saw the pale face of Gabriel de Montgomery.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE FATAL TOURNEY.

At the sight of his sad and solemn countenance the king felt a shudder run through his veins; but he would not acknowledge to himself, much less show to others, this feeling which he endeavored to repress; and because he had felt fear for a moment, he determined to be brave and rash.

Gabriel said gravely, a second time, "I beg of your majesty not to persist in this request."

"But I do persist, M. de Montgomery," replied the king.

Henri, thinking he discovered a kind of menace in Gabriel's words, grew obstinate, and determined not to yield to a weakness which he judged unworthy of a king

of France ; therefore, he continued, "Make ready, monsieur, to run against me."

At this moment M. de Boisy came to him, and said, that the queen begged him for love of her not to run this last course.

"Tell the queen," answered he, "that it is just for love of her that I do run."

Gabriel thought no longer, and scarcely seemed to breathe. He moved mechanically, and as if in a dream, doing instinctively what he had done before in like circumstances.

M. de Vielleville gave the signal. The two horses started off at full gallop, and Gabriel and the king met in the middle of the course, and passed each other without accident. The queen cast a look of relief and thankfulness to heaven. But she rejoiced too soon.

They were to pass each other again in returning ; but what danger could there be in this ? However, whether intentionally or from absence of mind, Gabriel did not, as was customary, throw away the lance which he had just broken, but in the return carried the jagged stump in the rest. It struck against the head of the king, and the violence of the blow, from the rapidity of his horse, was so great that the visor was raised, and the lance entered the king's eye, and came out at his ear. A great cry was raised by all the spectators.

"Ah ! I am dead !" were the king's first words ; then he murmured, "Let nothing be done to the Comte de Montgomery. It was justice. I pardon him," and he fainted.

It is impossible to describe the scene that followed. They bore away the queen, half dead ; and carried the king, who was still insensible, to his room at the Tournelles. Gabriel had dismounted, and leaned against the barrier, motionless and petrified, as if the blow had struck

himself. The last words of the king had been heard, and no one dared to touch him, though all regarded him with looks of terror and repugnance. The Admiral Coligny was the only one who had courage to approach him.

He passed near him, and said, in a low tone, "This is a terrible affair, friend; I know well that it was an accident, but you may get into trouble, and I advise you to quit France for a time. Count always on me. Au revoir!"

"Thank you," said Gabriel, without moving.

A few minutes after the Duc de Guise approached, and whispered, "An unlucky blow, Gabriel. But I can only pity, not blame you. If any one had heard our conversation the other day they would have thought this suspicious. But never mind. I am powerful, and devoted to you, as you know. Keep yourself concealed, but do not quit Paris—it is useless. If any one accuses you, think of me."

"Thanks, monseigneur," said Gabriel, in the same abstracted manner.

It was evident that the Duc de Guise, and, perhaps, Coligny also, thought it had not been entirely an accident. Gabriel walked slowly away, and returned to his own house without molestation.

At the Tournelles, the king's room was closed against all, except the queen, his children, and the surgeons—the latter of whom soon declared that there was no hope. The king remained insensible for four days; on the fifth he revived a little, and ordered that his sister's marriage should be celebrated. He spoke also to the queen and his children, but fever came on; and on the 10th of July he died. The same day Diana de Castro set off for her old convent at St. Quentin.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE REIGN OF FRANÇOIS THE SECOND. A NEW STATE OF THINGS.

To the favorite of a king, disgrace is like death, therefore Gabriel had sufficiently revenged himself on the Constable and Madame de Poitiers, for through him they fell from power into exile, and from fame into obscurity. It was this result that Gabriel waited to see.

During the eleven days that Henri lingered before his death the constable did everything in his power to preserve his influence in the government, and had neglected nothing and no one who could assist him to make head against the Duc de Guise. Madame de Poitiers aided him to the utmost.

When, on the 10th July, the young king was proclaimed, who was but sixteen, although the law declared him of age, on account of his youth, inexperience, and weak health, it was deemed necessary for some years to make over the conduct of affairs to a minister who, acting under his name, would be more powerful than himself. Who this should be, was the question. The Duc de Guise, the Constable, or Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, the next heir to the throne after the princes. On the 12th François was to receive at three o'clock the deputies from the Parliament, and he whom he should then present to them as his minister might, in fact, be considered king.

Catherine and the Duc de Guise had each, under the pretext of condoling with the young king, paid him a visit that morning for the purpose of urging their own claims. Catherine had even infringed, for this important point, the etiquette which enjoined her to remain forty

days without showing herself. Oppressed and neglected by her husband, she had felt awaken in her, during the last week, that vast and profound ambition which occupied her for the rest of her life; but as she could not really be regent to a king who was of age, her only chance was to reign through a minister who was devoted to her. The constable she put out of the question, for he had always supported Madame de Poitiers. Antoine de Bourbon would have been a more docile instrument in her hand, but he was of the reformed religion, and Jeanne d'Albret, his wife, was ambitious, besides which his title as prince of the blood, joined to this power, might inspire him with dangerous thoughts. There remained the Duc de Guise—but would he share his power with her, or would he aspire to govern alone? This she wished to know, and endeavored to find out in the interview which took place in the presence of the young king and queen.

They, still children, simple and loving, were ready to place confidence in the first comer who could skilfully gain possession of their minds. They sincerely grieved for the king's death, and Catherine found them sad and desolate.

"My son," said she, "it is right of you to shed these tears for the loss of one whom you, most of all, have reason to deplore. You know that I partake your grief, but remember that you have got other duties to perform besides those of a son, for you are also a father—the father of your people; after having paid your tribute of regret to the past, turn your thoughts towards the future—remember that you are a king, my son."

"Alas! madam, the scepter of France is a heavy burden for a hand of sixteen, and nothing had prepared me to think that such a task would fall on me so early."

"Sire, accept with gratitude and resignation the charge that God has imposed upon you. It will be for those who surround you and love you, to lighten it as much as lies

in their power, and to join their efforts to yours to help you to sustain it worthily."

"Madam, I thank you," replied the young king, uncertain how to answer, and mechanically he turned towards the duke as if to ask for counsel.

"Yes, sire," said he, "thank the queen for her good and encouraging words, and do not be content with simply thanking her, but tell her that, among those who love you and whom you love, she will always hold the first place, and that you count on her efficacious and maternal assistance in the difficult task which you have been called so young to fulfil."

"My uncle Guise has faithfully interpreted my thoughts, madam," replied the young king, delighted, "and has expressed them better than I could have done."

Catherine cast on the duke a grateful glance. "Sire," said she, "all the little wisdom I possess is at your service, and I shall be happy and proud each time you consult me; but I am only a woman, and you want by your side a defender who holds a sword. This strong arm—this male energy, you will doubtless seek among those whose alliance and relationship make your natural supporters."

Thus was a mute compact entered into between these two, which, however, we must confess, was not very sincere on either side, and not likely to last long.

The king understood his mother, and encouraged by a glance from Marie, held out his hand to his uncle. However, Catherine did not wish him to engage himself to the duke until she had obtained some pledges from him, so she said, "But before you choose a minister, sire, I have a request to make."

"Say an order to give me, madam."

"Well, my son, it concerns a woman who has done much harm to France. It is not for us to blame the weakness, which is now more than ever sacred to us, but

as your father is now unhappily no more, his will no longer reigns here, and yet this woman dares to remain to insult and afflict me by her presence. During the long lethargy of the king, it was represented to her that her residence here was no longer desirable. 'Is the king dead?' she asked, and when she was told that he still breathed, she replied, 'Then no one else has the right to order me.' And she remained."

The Duc de Guise here interrupted the queen. "Pardon, madam," said he, "but I believe I know the king's intentions on this point," and without further preamble, he struck on a bell. A valet appeared. "Let Madame de Poitiers be told that the king wishes to see her," said the duke.

The young king, so far from being displeased at having the authority thus taken from him, was delighted that the duke acted for him.

"I hope I do not presume too much, sire," said the duke.

"No, uncle; I know that whatever you do, will be well done."

"And all that you say is well said," whispered Marie in her husband's ear, who colored with pleasure, for, for an approving glance from her, he would have risked his whole kingdom.

Immediately after the valet announced La Duchesse de Valentinois, and Diana entered, evidently troubled, but still haughty.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

GABRIEL REVENGED.

DIANA bowed slightly to the young king, still more slightly to Catherine and Marie, while she did not even seem to be aware of the presence of the duke.

"Sire," said she, "your majesty has sent for me."

The king, at once irritated and confused at the presence of the ex-favorite, hesitated, colored, and at last said, "Our uncle of Guise will be kind enough to make known our intentions towards you, madam."

Diana turned haughtily towards the duke. "Madam," said he, "his majesty is aware of the profound grief which the king's death has caused you; he thanks you for it, and believes he will meet your desires by permitting you to quit the court and live in retirement. You can set off this evening."

Diana devoured a tear of rage and said, "His majesty divines my wishes; what more have I to do here? I am anxious to retire as soon as I can—believe me."

"All is for the best, then," replied the duke. "But, madam, your château of Anet, which you hold through the goodness of the late king, is doubtless too worldly and gay a retreat for a desolate mourner like you. Therefore Queen Catherine offers you in exchange her castle of Chaumont-sur-Loire, which is further from Paris, and more suitable to your future life. It will be at your disposal as soon as you wish."

Madame de Poitiers comprehended that this meant only an arbitrary confiscation, but how was she to resist, having no longer power or friends, so she yielded. "I shall be happy," she said, "to offer to the queen the magnificent domain which I owe to her husband's generosity."

"I accept this reparation, madam," said Catherine, coldly, and with another grateful glance towards the duke. "My castle shall be prepared immediately for your reception."

"And there," said the duke, "you can continue the correspondence and conferences which you have so extensively carried on during the last week with the Constable Montmorency."

"I did not think, monsieur, that I was doing wrong in

conferring with the greatest statesman and warrior of his majesty's reign, concerning the affairs of his kingdom."

"True," replied the implacable Catherine, "M. de Montmorency has filled with his glory and his labors two entire reigns, and it is full time, my son, that you should think of assuring to him the honorable retreat he has so well earned."

"M. de Montmorency," replied Diana, "expects, like myself, this return for his long services. He was with me when I was summoned to the king, and is doubtless waiting for me. I will return and announce to him your good intentions towards him, and he will, I doubt not, wait immediately on his majesty, and present to him his thanks and his adieux, and as he is a man, and one of the most powerful nobles in the kingdom, he will doubtless sooner or later find an opportunity of showing, better than by words, his profound gratitude to a king, who so reverences the past; and to the new counsellors who concur so willingly in the work of justice and public interest."

"The king is ready to receive M. de Montmorency," replied Catherine, pale with indignation, "and to listen to what he has to say."

"I will send him," said Diana; and she retired with a haughty look, but bitter inward grief. Pride on her face, but death in her heart.

Catherine had remarked that M. de Guise had given no opinion concerning the constable, so she said, "Madame de Poitiers is very impertinent about the constable, and it is certain that, if we leave him any authority, she will partake of it."

The duke was still silent: "My advice to your majesty," continued Catherine, "is, not to divide your confidence among many, but to choose for sole minister, either M. de Montmorency, you uncle Guise, or your uncle Bourbon—which you please. Is not this your opinion, M. de Guise?"

"Yes, madam, if it is yours."

"You should support my opinion, monsieur, which serves you; for the king knows well, that it is neither M. de Montmorency nor M. de Bourbon whom I desire to see his adviser."

"Madam," replied the duke, "believe in my profound gratitude and constant devotion."

"Well, then, when the deputies arrive, they will find us all in perfect unanimity."

"I am delighted at this good understanding," said the king; "and with my mother to advise me, and my uncle as minister, I begin to be reconciled to this royalty, which frightened me."

M. de Montmorency was now announced. He was at first calm and dignified, and, bowing respectfully to the king, said,—“Sire, I am not surprised to find that the old servant of your father and grandfather should find little favor with you. I do not complain of a reverse of fortune—that I expected—and I retire without a murmur. If ever my king or my country need my services again, I shall be found at Chantilly, ready to devote my life and property to your majesty.”

This moderation touched the young king, who, more than ever embarrassed, turned towards his mother in his distress; but the Duc de Guise, who knew that his interference would soon change this moderation into anger, said,—

“Since M. de Montmorency retires, he will doubtless deliver up to the king the royal seal, of which we shall have need.”

“Here it is,” cried the constable, furiously, “and I was about to do so without asking; but his majesty is, I see, surrounded by people disposed to counsel him to affront those who should be treated with gratitude.”

“Of whom do you speak, monsieur?” said Catherine.

"Of those who surround his majesty," replied he, rudely.

Catherine waited for no more, but commenced a torrent of reproaches for the manner in which he had always behaved towards her, and paid court to the reigning favorite. The constable replied by a laugh, which was a new insult. However, the duke, who had meanwhile been talking to the king, now rose, and said, quietly,—

"Monsieur, your friends and followers, Bochetel, L'Aubespine, and the rest, and also Brandi, the keeper of the seals, will, doubtless, wish to follow you into your retirement; the king thanks them for their services, and dispenses with them for the future. As for M. de Coligny, your nephew, who is at once governor of Picardy and of the Ile de France, the king considers this double charge too much for him, and wishes to relieve him from the duties of one, whichever he may choose. Will you have the goodness to let him know this? As for yourself——"

"Oh! are you about to take away my constable's baton?"

"You know that is impossible, and also that your title of grand master is perpetual. But his majesty considers these incompatible with that of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, which you also hold, and which his majesty desires to confer upon me, who have no other title."

"Well, monsieur, is this all?" said the constable, grinding his teeth.

"Yes, I believe so."

The constable could scarcely repress his passion, but he would not give to his rival the satisfaction of seeing him still further disgraced as a rebel, so he bowed, and prepared to go; but, turning back, he said,—“One word only, sire—one last duty to fulfil to the memory of your father. He who struck the fatal blow—the author of all our ills—was, perhaps, not simply unfortunate; at least, I have

reason to think so. There was, perhaps, a criminal intention, for the man whom I accuse considered himself injured by the king, and your majesty will doubtless order a severe inquiry to be instituted."

The Duc de Guise trembled at this formal accusation against Gabriel; however, Catherine hastened to reply. "Know, monsieur," said she, "that it did not require your intervention to call our attention to this point, and the widow of Henry the Second can leave to no one the initiative in this matter. You may, therefore, be easy, monsieur."

"I have then nothing to add," and, half suffocated with rage, he went out.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

CHANGE OF TEMPERATURE.

THE deputies from the parliament found the most perfect accord at the Louvre. François the Second, having his wife at his right, and his mother at his left, presented to them the Duc de Guise, as lieutenant-general of the kingdom; the Cardinal de Lorraine, as superintendent of finance; and François Olivier, as keeper of the seals.

One of the deputies, thinking, doubtless, that a little clemency would grace the new reign, asked for pardon for Anne Dubourg; but he forgot what a zealous Catholic the new minister was, who, pretending to misunderstand what was said, replied,—“Yes, gentlemen, the trial of Anne Dubourg, and his fellow-accused, shall be quickly terminated. Do not be afraid.”

When they were gone, François arose, fatigued, and said,—“We have done with business for to-day; have we not? My mother—my uncle—may we not soon leave Paris for a little while, and go to finish the time of

our mourning at Blois, on the banks of that Loire which Marie loves so much."

"Oh, yes!" cried Marie, "Paris is hateful on these fine summer days."

"M. de Guise will arrange about that," said Catherine; "but before leaving you to-day, my son, I have still a little more to say, and there still remains to you a sacred duty."

"What, madam?"

"That of justice. Your father died by a violent death, and he who struck him is either guilty or unfortunate. I myself lean to the former supposition, but, at all events, the question ought to be decided. If we allow such an action to pass without notice, without even inquiry, if it was voluntary, what dangers would not all kings run? An examination is, therefore, necessary."

"Then, madam, you wish to arrest M. de Montgomery?" said the duke.

"He was arrested this morning."

"Arrested! By whose orders?"

"By mine. I took this responsibility on myself. He might have fled at any moment, and it was important to prevent it. He has been brought to the Louvre, and I beg you, my son, to interrogate him." And she in her turn struck on the bell. "Bring in the prisoner," said she.

M. de Guise frowned, the king appeared undecided, and Marie Stuart unquiet. Gabriel entered, pale, but calm. The young king changed color on seeing him, and said to his mother, "Speak for me, madam, if you please."

"Monsieur," said she to Gabriel, in a haughty tone, "we have summoned you before his majesty that he might interrogate you himself so as to learn your guilt or innocence. Are you prepared to answer?"

"I am ready to listen, madam."

"Singular circumstances speak against you, monsieur. Your long absences from Paris ; your voluntary exile from the court for nearly two years, and your presence and mysterious attitude at the fatal tourney. How did it happen that you, so accustomed to these games, omitted to throw away your broken lance? Reply—what have you to say?"

"Nothing, madam."

"Nothing !" cried Catherine, astonished.

"No, madam."

"Then you confess?"

"I confess nothing."

"You deny, then?"

"I deny nothing, either ; I am simply silent."

"Monsieur, take care. You would, perhaps, be wiser to try and defend yourself. Know that M. de Montmorency affirms that you had complaints against the king."

"Did he say that, madam?"

"No, but doubtless he will."

"Let him if he dare."

"Then you refuse to answer?"

"I do."

"Torture will, perhaps, change your resolution."

"I do not think so, madam."

"You are risking your life by this obstinacy, I warn you."

"I care not, madam ; it is not worth keeping, and I shall not defend myself."

"You are right," cried Marie ; "this silence is that of a noble gentleman who will not even deign to defend himself against suspicion, lest it should touch him in any way."

Catherine looked frowningly at her.

"Yes, I am, perhaps, wrong to speak so," said Marie ; "but I speak as I think and feel ; my heart will always speak, and I cannot repress its emotions ; I have no poli-

ties but those of my instincts, and this instinct now tells me that M. de Montgomery did not coldly conceive and voluntarily execute such a crime, and that when he refuses to justify himself, it is because he holds himself above such a suspicion."

The young king looked with love and delight at his darling speaking with so much eloquence and enthusiasm, and looking, while so doing, prettier than ever.

"Oh! thanks, madam," said Gabriel, "you speak like yourself."

"Have we done with this childish sentimentality?" said Catherine, angrily.

"No, madam," said Marie, who felt hurt; "if you have done with such feelings, we, who are young, are, thank God, just beginning them. Is it not true?" she added, turning towards her husband.

The king did not answer, but he kissed the pretty fingers which she held out to him.

"Oh!" cried Catherine, angrily, "I claim a right, and I am mocked in return. I asked only that the murderer of the king should be questioned, and when he refuses to answer, he is approved and praised. Well, then! I openly declare myself the accuser of M. de Montgomery. Will the king refuse justice to his mother because she is his mother? We will hear the constable, and the death of a king, traitorously assassinated, shall be avenged." Then turning to the duke, she said, "But you say nothing, M. le Duc, yet I am sure you agree with me."

"No, madam, I do not, and, therefore, I was silent."

"Ah! you also turn against me."

"I have for once this regret, madam. As far as concerned Madame de Poitiers and the constable, I joined you heartily; but as for M. de Montgomery, I cannot in conscience partake of your sentiments. It seems impossible to make a brave and loyal gentleman responsible

for an accident. A trial would but result in his triumph and his accuser's shame; and as for the danger which you speak of to kings, it seems to me that it would be much greater if you were to let the world think this a premeditated act."

"High political maxims, doubtless."

"They seem to me true; and for these and other reasons I think we should request M. de Montgomery to excuse this arrest, which has happily, however, been kept secret, and send him away free and honored to-day as he was yesterday and will ever be."

"And what is your opinion, my son?"

A look from Marie took away all hesitation from the king, and he said, "I confess I agree with my uncle, madam."

"Then you betray the memory of your father."

"I respect it, on the contrary, madam. The first words which my father spoke after his wound, were to beg that M. de Montgomery should not be pursued, and he reiterated this order before his death. Permit his son to obey him."

"Then you begin by despising your mother and attending exclusively to others."

"I attend to the voice of my conscience, my mother," replied François with more firmness than might have been expected from him.

"Is this your determination, François? Take care; if you begin by refusing your mother her first request, by being obstinate to her and docile to others, I shall occupy myself no longer with your affairs, but shall withdraw from you the counsels of my experience and devotion, and will go into retirement and abandon you, my son. Think of it well."

"We shall deplore this retreat, madam, but will learn to resign ourselves," said Marie,

"Good," replied Catherine. "As for him," pointing to Gabriel, "I shall find another time." And with a terrible glance in which might almost have been read all the future crimes of her life, she went out.

CHAPTER LXXX.

GABRIEL'S NEW ALLEGIANCE.

AFTER her departure, there was a short silence. François was almost frightened at his own boldness, and Marie at the threatening look of Queen Catherine. The duke was secretly pleased at so easily getting rid of so ambitious and dangerous an associate.

Gabriel was the first to speak: "Sire, and you, madam, and you, monseigneur," said he, "I thank you for your good and generous intentions towards an unfortunate wretch, abandoned of Heaven. But still I say, of what use is it to ward off danger and death from so sad and lost an existence as mine? My life is no longer useful to any one, not even to myself."

"Gabriel," said the duke, "your life has been glorious in the past, and doubtless will be again; you are a man of energy, and we who govern want such."

"And," said the king, "your former services authorize me to count on your future ones. War may break out again, and I would not wish that a moment of despair, whatever be the cause, should deprive us of a defender who I am sure is as loyal as brave."

Gabriel listened with surprise. "Yes," said he, "this unexpected goodness from you, who perhaps ought to hate me, changes my soul and my destiny. To you, sire—to you, madam and monseigneur, belong my life, which you have almost given to me; I am not ungrateful by nature, and your kindness touches me to the heart."

"All is quiet now, Gabriel," said the duke, "and it is better that for a time your name should not be brought forward. But in a year or two, I will demand for you from the king, your reappointment as captain of the guard."

"It is not honors that I wish for, but occasions of being useful. You will think me ungrateful, if I say occasions of seeking death."

"Do not speak so, Gabriel; say only that you will be ready when the king calls for you."

"Wherever I may be, or wherever his majesty may wish to send me," replied Gabriel.

"That is enough."

"And I," said the king, "thank you for this promise, and will endeavor that you shall not repent it."

"Yes," said Marie, "our confidence shall equal your devotion."

Gabriel kissed the hands of the king and the queen, pressed that of the duke, and took leave. That night Gabriel, kneeling beside his father's tomb, cried, "Yes, doubtless, my father, I had sworn to punish your murderer, not only in his own life, but in that of his children; but are there not duties even more sacred than this oath? If you could speak, my father, I feel that you would tell me to lay aside my anger, and not to return confidence by treason."

CHAPTER LXXXI.

THE CHILD KING AND QUEEN.

Six or seven months had passed. It was on the 27th of February that the court was, for the time, assembled at Blois. There had been a grand fête the evening before, and the young king and queen were talking it over.

"Really," said Marie, "I found all the amusements most delightful."

"Yes," replied François, "the ballet and the scenes were charming, but I found the sonnets and madrigals rather too long."

"Oh! they were so gallant and witty."

"But too perpetually adulatory. It is not very amusing to hear oneself praised for two or three hours—besides some of them were so interlarded with Latin, which I did not understand."

"But that is the fashion."

"Oh! you are so clever, Marie," sighed the young king; "you write verses and understand Latin so much better than I do."

"It is our recreation. You men are more occupied with action."

"Nevertheless, I should like to be as clever, even, as my brother Charles."

"Talking of him, did you remark his part in the allegory of religion defended by the three virtues?"

"Yes; he was Charity."

"True; and did you notice how furiously he struck at the head of Heresy?"

"Yes; when he advanced amidst the flames, upon this serpent, he was almost mad with rage."

"And did not Heresy look like M. de Coligny?"

"Wonderfully. And then the devils carried him off."

"Yes, our uncle was delighted at that, and your mother smiled a smile that almost frightened me. But did she not look handsome yesterday? Her dress was magnificent."

"Yes, mignonne, and I have sent to Constantinople for one like it for you."

"Oh! thanks, dear François, I do not certainly envy our sister, Elizabeth of England, who, they say, never puts a dress on twice; but I do not like that any woman

in France, even your mother, should be better dressed than I."

"At all events you will always be the most beautiful. You looked like an angel last night, and your dancing was perfect. I saw no one but you—I love no one but you. Had you been only a simple peasant, I should have preferred you to all the queens in the world."

"And I, had you been a simple page, would have given you my heart. But we must not forget the important business we have to settle."

"Business!"

"Yes," replied Marie, gravely, "my uncle charges us to decide the colors for the dress of the Swiss Guards."

"Well, let us deliberate. What is the opinion of your majesty on this difficult question?"

"Oh, I will only speak after you. What do you say?"

"It is not easy to decide, and you will not assist me. The first color——"

"Must be white—that of France."

"Then the second must be blue, for Scotland."

"Well—and the third?"

"Yellow."

"No; that is Spain. Green would be better."

"That is the color of the Guises."

"Well, monsieur, is that a reason for excluding it?"

"No; but will these three colors harmonize?"

"Oh! an idea. We will take red, the Swiss color; that will recall their country to the poor fellows."

"An idea as excellent as your heart, Marie."

At this moment the door opened quickly, and the Cardinal de Lorraine entered, pale and out of breath, followed by the duke, more calm but as serious.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

REVOLT.

"WHAT! M. le Cardinal," cried François, "can I not have a moment's peace even here?"

"Sire, I regret to disobey your majesty's commands, but the affair which brings us is too important to suffer delay."

"Speak, then."

"Sire, a conspiracy against your majesty has just been discovered. Your days are no longer in safety here, and you must leave at once."

"A conspiracy! Leave Blois! What does this mean?"

"It means, sire, that wicked people attack your crown and life."

"What! they wish to injure me—so young—so recently king? I, who voluntarily and knowingly have never injured any one. Who are these people, monsieur?"

"Who should they be, but these cursed heretics."

"Again the heretics! Are you sure, monsieur, that you are not led away by unjust suspicions?"

"Unhappily there is no doubt this time."

"What have I done that my people should not love me?"

"I have just informed your majesty that it was the Huguenots?"

"But they are not the less French. Really, M le Cardinal, I delegated to you my power, in hopes to make my people bless me, and I hear of nothing but troubles and discontent."

"Oh, sire!" cried Marie, reproachfully.

"It is not just, sire, to make me responsible for the misfortunes of the times," said the cardinal.

"Nevertheless, monsieur, I would know a little more of what is passing, that I may learn whether it is of you or me that they complain."

"Oh, your majesty!" cried Marie, again.

The king stopped, fearing he had gone too far. The duke never spoke, but after a pause the cardinal said, in a constrained tone, "Sire, since we have the grief of seeing our efforts misunderstood, there only remains for us to retire and leave our places to others, worthier or more fortunate. Your majesty has then but to decide who is to succeed us. As to my office, there will be no difficulty; your majesty has only to choose between M. Olivier, M. le Cardinal de Tournou, and M. de l'Hôpital."

Marie, full of grief, hid her face in her hands. François, repentant, wished his words unsaid, but did not dare to speak.

"But," continued the cardinal, "to replace my brother is much more difficult, and I scarcely know who can pretend to it. M. de Bussac, perhaps——"

"Bussac, who is always scolding—impossible!"

"Then there is M. de Montmorency——"

"Oh! he is too old, and I have not forgotten his behavior when I was dauphin. But why do you omit my relations—the Prince de Condé, for example?"

"Sire, I regret to tell your majesty, that among the names of the chiefs of this conspiracy, that of M. de Condé stands first."

"Is it possible?"

"Sire, it is certain."

"It is, then, a serious plot?"

"It is a revolt, sire; and since your majesty discharges us from the terrible responsibility which weighed on us, I beg you to name our successors without delay, for, in a

few days, the Protestants will be under the walls of Blois."

"What!" cried Marie, terrified.

"Are the rebels numerous?" asked the king.

"I hear, about 2000 men."

"And it is in such a situation that you would abandon me."

"I thought it was your majesty's desire."

"Oh, I was sad to hear that I had such enemies. But think of it no more, and tell me what can be done."

"Sire, if your majesty feels confidence in us——"

"Entire confidence, monsieur."

"There has been much time lost," said the duke. They were his first words, but he now advanced, and continued, "Sire, 2000 insurgents, commanded by the Baron de la Renaudie, and secretly supported by the Prince de Condé, are about to make a descent from Poitou, Bearn, and other provinces, and endeavor to carry off your majesty from this castle of Blois."

François made a movement of surprise and indignation.

"Carry off the king!" cried Marie.

"And you with him, madam. But make yourself easy, we are watching."

"But what shall you do?" asked the king.

"We only learned this an hour ago. But the first thing to do, sire, is to make your person safe. You must at once leave this city, which is defenseless, and retire to Amboise, where the castle is fortified."

"What!" said Marie, "shut us up in that castle, which is so somber and triste!"

"Madam, it must be."

"Then we fly before these rebels."

"Sire, one cannot fly before an enemy who has not declared war. We are supposed to be ignorant of all this. I only trust they will follow you to Amboise."

“Why so?”

“Because it will be an occasion to strike a decisive blow, and finishing with them once for all.”

“Alas! it is still civil war.”

“We must, however, meet them, and punish them, sire. This is my plan. Beyond retiring from Blois, let us give them no intimation of our knowledge of their designs, but feign perfect ignorance and security, and when they advance to surprise us, it will be we, on the contrary, who will surprise and seize them. Therefore, I pray you, madam, to show no alarm or intention to fly. I will take care that everything is ready, but in secret.”

“What hour is fixed for our departure?” asked the king, with a resigned air.

“Three o’clock, sire. I have had everything prepared beforehand.”

“Beforehand?”

“Yes, sire, for I felt sure that your majesty would yield to reason.”

“Well, we will be ready.”

“I thank your majesty for your confidence in us, and now we must pray you to excuse us, for we have much to do.”

They bowed and retired. Then the young king and queen looked sadly at each other. “Well, ma mie?” said he.

“Is it not tiresome?”

At this moment Madame Dazette, the queen’s woman-in-waiting, entered.

“Is it true, madam, that we are to move at once?”

“Too true, Madame Dazette.”

“But madam, do you know that the castle of Amboise is not fit to receive you; that there is not even a mirror perfect?”

“Then we must take all with us. Write at once a list

of necessary things,—I will dictate. First, my new dress of crimson damask with gold trimmings——” Then turning to the king, “Will you not also, sire, occupy yourself with what you will require?”

“No, I shall leave that to Aubert; I am too much grieved.”

“I am sure I am not less so. Madame Dazette, put down my fardingale of violet and gold, and my robe of white and silver; also my dressing gown of silver cloth trimmed with lynx fur. It is centuries, is it not, sire, since the old castle of Amboise has been inhabited by the court?”

“Since the reign of Charles the Eighth, I do not believe any king has been there for more than two or three days.”

“And who knows if we shall not be there a whole month? Oh! these wretched Huguenots. Do you think, Madame Dazette, that the bed-chambers will be decently furnished?”

“I do not know, madam; but the safest plan will be to take everything with us.”

“Then put down my mirror, framed in gold, my dressing-case of violet velvet, and the velvet carpet to surround the bed. But, sire, did you ever hear of subjects attacking their king, and driving him away in this manner?”

“Never, I think, Marie,” replied François, sadly. “They have sometimes resisted him, but to attack him just——”

“Well! we cannot take too many precautions. Madame Dazette, a dozen pairs of shoes, pillow-cases and sheets. Is that all? Really I can hardly think. Oh! my velvet pelisse—the gold taper stand—I cannot think of anything else——”

“Will not your majesty take your jewels?”

“Oh! yes. Leave them here, they might fall into the

hands of these people. I think I have omitted nothing important, Madame Dazette."

"Madam thinks, I trust, of her book of prayers."

"Ah, you remind me of it. Take the handsomest—the one my uncle gave me, bound in scarlet velvet and gold. Madame Dazette, you must look after everything—we are so absorbed by this cruel necessity——"

"What about the lackeys and attendants, your majesty?"

"Oh! let them wear their undress liveries. Now, you may go, Dazette."

Dazette curtsyed, and went towards the door.

"Oh! Dazette," cried Marie, "be sure that they take their state liveries with them."

"Am I not right, sire?" said Marie, when they were alone. "One must think a little of appearances—one must not be too much humiliated by these Huguenots. Indeed, I hope we can give a fête at Amboise—oh! do not shake your head, sire; we will show them that we do not fear them, and I am sure that a ball would be excellent policy, as your mother would say."

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

TWO APPEALS.

SINCE we last saw Gabriel, he had led a retired and lonely life. He—formerly the man of action and energy—now delighted in solitude and oblivion. He never showed himself at court: and, young in years, seemed old through sorrow. He often regretted that the king and queen had placed themselves between him and the anger of Catherine. At times, however, his youth seemed to assert itself, and he longed for war to employ his energies

again. Meanwhile, he studied assiduously various books of religious controversy, and became thoroughly convinced by and enthusiastic for the great principles revealed by Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and Theodore de Bèze, and he often longed to give his life for this good cause.

On the 6th of March, he was sitting meditating as usual, when Aloyse brought in a messenger, booted, spurred, and muddy, as after a long journey. This courier had come from Amboise, bearing letters from the Duc de Guise. Gabriel opened his, and read,—

“MY DEAR GABRIEL,—I write hastily, and have no time to explain. You told us—the king and I—that you were devoted to us, and that when we had need of you, we had but to call. We call to-day. Set off at once for Amboise, where the king and queen now are, and I will tell you on your arrival how you can serve us. Of course you will be free to act or not; but come at once, and you will be, as ever, welcome.

“Yours affectionately, FRANÇOIS DE LORRAINE.”

The messenger had left while Gabriel was reading.

“Aloyse,” said Gabriel, “tell André to prepare my valise, and get my horse saddled.”

“You are going away, monsieur?”

“Yes; in two hours.”

Soon after, another messenger arrived, and asked to see the count. Gabriel trembled on recognizing the man who had formerly brought him a letter from La Renaudie. He had in fact brought him another, which began as follows:—

“Friend and Brother,—I wished to see you before leaving Paris, but my time was short, and I could not press your hand and tell you our hopes and projects. We know, however, that you are one of us, and that with you there

is no need of preparation, but that a word is enough. This word is, that we have need of you. We know you are not pledged to us, but still, come to Noizai, where one of us will meet you.

L. R."

"P. S. If you meet any of our troops, give the words, 'Genève,' and 'Gloire de Dieu.'"

"What does this mean?" thought Gabriel. "These opposite appeals—each calling me nearly to the same place. I am under obligations to both, and to both I will go; however difficult may be my position, at least I will not be a traitor."

An hour after he set off.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

A PERILOUS CONFIDENCE.

GABRIEL entered the presence of the Duc de Guise, if possible paler and sadder than ever, for a few words which he had heard from some of the guards had given him some insight into the state of affairs. The king had been so good to him, and the party to whom he was devoted being in open revolt against him, Gabriel's mind was distracted by different feelings.

"Well, Gabriel," said the duke, "you know now, I dare say, why I sent for you?"

"I suspect; but do not know exactly, monseigneur."

"The Huguenots are in open revolt—they are coming to attack us in this castle."

"It is a sad and dreadful extremity," said Gabriel, thinking of his own situation.

"My friend, it is a magnificent occasion."

"What do you mean, monseigneur?"

"I mean that the Huguenots think to surprise us, and

that we are prepared for them. Their plans are discovered—their projects betrayed. They have begun the war, and they will be delivered over to our swords—they are lost, I tell you.”

“Good heavens!” cried Gabriel.

“We know all the details of their mad enterprise. On the 16th, at noon, they are to unite in the city, and attack us. They have friends in the king’s guards—they will be changed. These friends were to have opened the west door to them—it will be guarded. Then their forces are to arrive secretly through the paths of the forest of Château-Regnault—the royal troops will fall on these detached parties as they arrive, so that the half of their forces will never reach Amboise.”

“How do you know all this?”

“Two of their own men have denounced them—the one for money, and the other through fear. The first, whom you doubtless know, is the Marquis——”

“Do not tell me,” cried Gabriel; “I did not mean to ask. It is so difficult for a man of honor not to betray traitors.”

“Oh!” said the duke, in some surprise, “we have full confidence in you, Gabriel. I was speaking of you yesterday to the queen and she was pleased that I had sent for you.”

“And why did you send for me?”

“Why! Because the king has few devoted and sure servants, and we want you to command a detachment against the rebels.”

“Against the rebels! impossible!”

“Impossible! and why? I am not accustomed to hear that word from you, Gabriel.”

“Monseigneur, I am of their religion.”

The duke started back, with a frightened surprise.

“It is so,” continued Gabriel, sadly. “When it shall

please you, monseigneur, to send me against the English or Spaniards you know I shall not draw back, and that I will give my life with joy; but in a civil war—in a religious war against my countrymen, my brothers—I am obliged to decline.”

“You a Huguenot!” cried the duke.

“Yes, and a firm one. I have faith in the new ideas, and have given my soul to them.”

“And at the same time your sword, doubtless,” said the duke, bitterly.

“No, monseigneur.”

“What! you mean to tell me that you were ignorant of the designs of your brothers, as you call them, and that these brothers renounce the aid of a champion like you.”

“They must.”

“Then you will desert them, for your new faith places you between two desertions.”

“No, monseigneur.”

“How will you arrange then?”

“Monseigneur, my opinion is that the more I am in a false position the more it behoves me to be perfectly straightforward and sincere. I declared some time ago to the Protestants that sacred obligations to the king, queen, and yourself would prevent me from fighting in their ranks—if it came to fighting. They knew that reform was for me a religion, and not a party, and I have stipulated always for freedom of action. To them as to you I have the right to refuse my assistance; in this sad conflict between my gratitude and my religion my heart will bleed at every stroke, but by remaining neuter I trust to remain honest.”

The duke, now calmed down a little, could not but admire the frankness and noble spirit of his old companion in arms. “You are a strange man, Gabriel,” said he.

“Why strange, monseigneur? I was ignorant, I swear to you, of this conspiracy; however I have, I confess, received since your summons a letter from one of them, saying simply, ‘Come.’ I foresaw partly the hard alternative in which I should be placed, but still I came. I came to say to you, I cannot fight against my brothers in religion; and I meant to say to them, I cannot fight against those who spared my life.”

The duke held out his hand to the young man. “I was wrong,” said he; “but you may imagine my annoyance at finding you among our enemies.”

“Your enemy I never can be, monseigneur, and I trust that, although a Huguenot, you still have faith in me, and in case of a foreign war would still call me.”

“Yes, Gabriel; while I deplore the separation between us, I shall ever trust in you, and to prove it to you, take this,” and sitting down, he wrote an order to leave Amboise whenever he pleased. “With this you are safe, and it is no small mark of confidence, Gabriel.”

“And this I refuse, monseigneur.”

“How! Why?”

“Monseigneur, do you know where I shall go on leaving here?”

“That is your business, and I do not ask.”

“But I will tell you. I should go among the rebels at Noizai.”

“At Noizai! Castlenau commands there.”

“Oh! you know everything, monseigneur.”

“And what would you do at Noizai?”

“What? Say, here I am, you called me, but I can do nothing for you. And I may not warn them of the snare into which they are about to fall—your confidence forbids me. So, monseigneur, keep me a prisoner here, and save me from this cruel trial.”

“I cannot do that, Gabriel; I trust you.”

"Then, monseigneur, I implore you—by all I have ever done and suffered—one other favor."

"What is it? I will grant it if I can."

"You can—you even ought; for after all, they are Frenchmen, with whom you are about to fight. Permit me to dissuade them from their fatal project—not by revealing its certain issue—but by entreaties."

"Take care, Gabriel," said the duke, solemnly; "if a word escape you of our plans, and the reformers persist in their design—only altering the execution of it—it will be the king and queen who will be lost. Think of it well. Then if you pass your word not to let them even suspect my knowledge of their plans."

"I promise on my honor as a gentleman."

"Go then, and do your best to induce them to renounce their criminal designs, and I will renounce my certain victory, remembering that it is French blood I spare."

"For them and for myself I thank you, monseigneur."

A quarter of an hour after he was en route for Noizai.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE DISLOYALTY OF LOYALTY.

THANKS to the instructions of La Renaudie, Gabriel arrived safely at Noizai, which was to be the rallying place for the 16th. It was now on the afternoon of the 15th.

He was met by the Baron de Castlenau, a valiant and and generous young man, who had the command of this post. "Here you are, M. de Montgomery," said he, "although I hardly expected you, for I knew that you had said that during the reign of François the Second your sword could not belong to us."

"M. de la Renaudie did not mention in his letter what you wanted me for."

"No, and he has charged me to unfold to you our designs and hopes." Castlenau then repeated to Gabriel all that he had already heard from the Duc de Guise, and he saw with terror how fearfully correctly the duke had been informed.

"Now you know all," said Castlenau; "can you help us?"

"I cannot," said Gabriel, with a sigh.

"Well! we are not the less friends; and we are sure of victory."

"Are you quite sure of it?"

"Perfectly. The enemy suspects nothing, and will be taken by surprise. We had some fear when the court removed from Blois, for they evidently had some suspicions."

"No doubt of it."

"Yes, but instead of injuring, this change will serve us. The Duc de Guise now believes himself in perfect safety, and we have friends in the place who will open the west door to us when we present ourselves. Our success is certain."

"The event often disappoints sanguine hopes."

"But here it cannot—to-morrow will see the triumph of our party."

"Suppose treason——" said Gabriel, with a heart full of grief.

"Impossible. None but the chiefs are in the secret, and they are all incapable of it. I believe, M. de Montgomery, that you are envious of us, that you persist in auguring ill to our enterprise."

"Yes, it is true, I do envy you."

"I was sure of it," laughed the young man.

"Yet, seriously, you have some confidence in me?"

"Seriously, the greatest."

"Will you listen to good advice?"

"What is it?"

"Renounce your design for to-morrow—send off messengers immediately to say the design has failed, or at least must be adjourned."

"But, why?" asked Castlenau, who began to take alarm; "you must have some reason for speaking thus."

"Mon Dieu, no."

"Oh! you would not advise me, without a reason, to abandon so brilliant a stroke."

"No, it is not without a reason, but I cannot divulge it to you. Will you not believe me on my simple word?"

"Listen, monsieur; if I take on myself this strange resolution to turn back at the last moment, I shall be responsible to all our chiefs. May I refer them to you?"

"Yes."

"And you will tell them the motives which induced you to advise such a step?"

"Alas! I cannot."

"How, then, can I yield? Would they not cruelly reproach me for having thus, at a word, destroyed all their hopes? Whatever confidence we have in you, you are but a man, and may be deceived."

"Then take care, baron, you take on yourself the responsibility of all that may prove fatal in this affair."

Castlenau was struck with the tone of these words. "M. de Montgomery," said he, with a sudden enlightenment, "I believe I guess the truth: you have been told or have surmised a secret which you are forbidden to reveal, and you know something fatal to the issue of our enterprise. We have been betrayed—have we not?"

"I did not say so."

"Or else you have seen the Duc de Guise, who is your

friend ; and he, not knowing you to be a Huguenot, told you his plans."

"I gave you no reason to think so."

"Or else, in passing through Amboise, you have discovered preparations—heard something ; in fact, our plot is discovered."

"Have I said so ? "

"No, count, for I see you are pledged to secrecy. Therefore I ask you no longer for any positive assurance—not even a word ; but, if I am right, a gesture, even your silence will suffice."

Gabriel, full of anxiety, remembered his promise to the duke, not to let what he knew even be suspected, and remained buried in thought.

"You are silent," cried Castlenau. "I understand, and shall act accordingly."

"What will you do, then ? "

"Warn the other chiefs immediately, that some one in whom we have confidence has denounced to me a probable treason."

"But I have not done so."

"No, but I understand you, nevertheless, and you have saved us. Once on our guard, all will go badly for them, and well for us. We will adjourn our enterprise to a safer time. We will seek for our traitors, we will redouble our precautions, and some day, when everything is favorable, we will renew our attempt, and thanks to you, we shall succeed."

"But that is just what I want to avoid," cried Gabriel, with terror, seeing himself on the brink of an involuntary treason. "The real reason, M. de Castlenau, of my advice and warnings, is, that I think your enterprise guilty and dangerous. By attacking the Catholics, you give them right on their side ; you justify reprisals, and from the oppressed, become rebels. If you have to complain of the

ministers, should you therefore attack the young king? Oh, let your principles fight for you, but do not shed blood. Let me entreat you to abstain from civil war, which but retards the ultimate triumph of our cause."

"Is this really the motive of your warnings?"

"Yes," said Gabriel, in a hollow voice.

"Then," said Castlenau, coldly, "I thank you for your intentions, but must not the less act according to my orders, and if you will allow me, I will leave you to give the necessary directions."

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

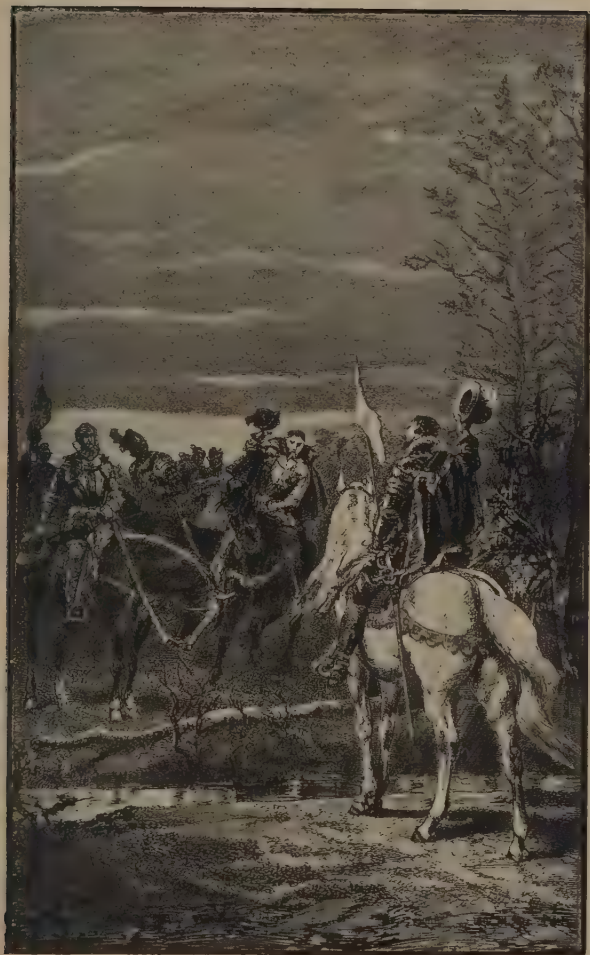
GABRIEL did not leave the castle of Noizai, but determined to pass the night there, as at all events his presence would be a pledge of his good faith. Castlenau left him perfectly free, but took no notice of him.

With the earliest morning the troops of the Huguenots began to assemble in small parties, and by eleven all was ready. Gabriel knew none of the chiefs, as La Renaudie was not present, but was to come through the forest of Château-Regnault.

Castlenau, who in his joy pardoned Gabriel, said to him, "Well, M. le Comte, you see you were wrong, and that all goes well; all our people have arrived, and even more than we expected, and have met with no opposition on the road——"

The baron was interrupted by a sound of trumpets, arms, and a great tumult.

"That must be the arrival of more reinforcements," cried he; "doubtless La Motte and Deschamps, with the



Gabriel then went down, and, with a flag in his hand, advanced towards the duke. Page 329.

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troops from Picardy. They were not to have arrived till to-morrow, but they must have made a forced march—the brave fellows—to have their share in the combat. Come, M. le Comte, from this gallery we can see.”

Gabriel followed, as pale as death, but when Castlenau arrived where he could command a view of the field, he uttered a great cry, and stood as if petrified. It was not the Huguenot troops, but the royal ones under the command of Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours. Under cover of the woods, which surrounded the castle, they had arrived secretly, and came suddenly on the terrace where the advanced guard of the rebels was drawn up ready to march. They, taken by surprise, did not even resist, and Castlenau arrived only to see them give up their swords to the victors. He could not believe his eyes, but remained thunderstruck and motionless. Gabriel, less surprised, was not less overwhelmed.

As they stood thus, an ensign entered precipitately. “M. le Baron!” cried he, “they have carried the drawbridge and the first door; we have closed the second, but it cannot hold for a quarter of an hour. Shall we resist or negotiate?”

“I will come,” said Castlenau.

Gabriel followed him. “What shall you do, my friend?” said he.

“I do not know. One can always die.”

“Alas! why did you not believe me yesterday?”

“Yes, you were right, I see. You foresaw all this—perhaps knew it beforehand.”

“Yes, and that is my greatest distress. But reflect, Castlenau, that I had passed my word of honor that I would neither directly nor indirectly allow you to suspect the truth.”

“Then you were right to be silent. It is I who was mad. I should have known that a brave man does not

argue against war without powerful motives. But I will expiate my fault—I will die.”

“And I with you, then.”

“You! and why?”

“I will not fight—I am pledged not to do so; but my life is burdensome to me, and I will go without arms. I will not kill, but I shall be killed.”

“It must not be so—I do not wish to drag you to death with me.”

“Why not? You are going to drag with you all who are shut in here, and my life is far more useless than theirs.”

“I cannot do otherwise for the glory of our cause, than demand this sacrifice from them. Martyrs are often more useful to a cause than conquerors.”

“Yes, but is it not your first duty, as a commander, to try and save the troops entrusted to you?”

“Then you advise me——?”

“To try pacific measures. If you resist, you cannot escape defeat and massacre—if you yield, it appears to me, that they cannot punish very severely a design which was never executed.”

“I regret not to have taken your advice before, but I will do so now. Yet it is repugnant to me to draw back.”

“To draw back, you must have advanced. Who, until now, can prove you rebellious? My presence here may perhaps still be useful to you. May I try to save you?”

“What will you do?”

“Nothing unworthy, you may be satisfied. I will go to the Duc de Nemours and tell him that you will open the doors, if he will engage to hold you and yours harmless, and will conduct you to the king to explain your wrongs, and then set you free.”

“But if he refuse?”

"Then the wrong is on his side. If he refuses, Castle-nau, I will return and die with you."

"Do you think Renaudie would consent if he were here?"

"On my honor, I believe any reasonable man would."

"Then do as you will."

"Thanks, I trust to succeed and save many noble lives."

Gabriel then went down, and, with a flag in his hand, advanced towards the duke, who was on horseback waiting to hear whether there was to be peace or war. After a short interview, Gabriel returned with the following written lines:—

"M. de Castlenau and his companions, having consented immediately to lay down their arms, I the undersigned Jacques de Savoie, have sworn on my faith as a prince—on my honor and my salvation—that I will leave them safe and sound, and that fifteen of them, of whom M. de Castlenau shall be one, shall be taken to the king at Amboise, to make their peaceful remonstrances.

"Given at the Château de Noizai, 16th March, 1560.

"JACQUES DE SAVOIE."

"Thanks, my friend," said Castlenau; "you have saved both life and honor."

But Gabriel still looked sad. "I think," said he, "of La Renaudie and the others who were to attack to-night. I fear it is too late to save them. Still I might try. He comes through the forest?"

"Yes, you might meet him, and save him as you have done us."

"I will try at all events. We will meet at Amboise."

Castlenau and his companions followed the Duc de Nemours confident and trustful, but, immediately on their arrival, they were thrown into prison, to wait, as was said, the result of the attack.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE FOREST OF CHATEAU-REGNAULT.

THE forest of Château-Regnault was not more than a league and a half from Noizai, and Gabriel went there at full gallop ; but when he arrived, he wandered about for an hour and a half without meeting friend or foe. At last he heard the regular tramp of cavalry ; he rode in the direction of the sound, and found it to be the royal troops. He recognized their commander, the Baron de Pardaillau, a young and brave officer, who had served with him in Italy.

“Ah ! M. de Montgomery,” said he, “I thought you were at Noizai.”

“I come from there.”

“Tell me what has passed.”

Gabriel recounted all that had taken place and its peaceful termination.

“Pardieu !” cried Pardaillau, “I should like to have the same good fortune. Do you know, M. de Montgomery, that I am marching against La Renaudie, my cousin, friend, and companion in arms. It is hard to have to fight against those who have fought at our sides.”

“True, but you are not sure of meeting him.”

“Alas ! my orders are but too precise, and those who have betrayed him have given too particular instructions. In a quarter of an hour, I shall be in the place where I shall meet him.”

“But if you did not go there.”

“I should fail in my duty as a soldier. Besides, I could not do so, if I would, for my lieutenants have instructions as well as myself. No, my only hope is, that

Renaudie will surrender to me—a small one, certainly, for he is brave and proud, and he cannot be surprised here, as Castlenau was. Will you aid me, M. de Montgomery, to bring about peace?”

“I will do my best.”

“To the devil with these civil wars.”

They walked along for some time in silence, when, as they turned into an avenue, Pardaillau said, “We must now be near—how my heart beats! For the first time in my life, I believe I am afraid.”

They advanced silently and cautiously, and soon they thought they saw a glitter of arms through the trees, and a voice almost immediately cried, “Who goes there?”

“It is Renaudie’s voice,” said Pardaillau, and he replied, “Valois and Lorraine!”

Renaudie and his troop were now in sight. They halted, and Renaudie advanced a few steps, and Pardaillau did the same.

“If I am not mistaken,” said Renaudie, “that is my dear Pardaillau.”

“Yes, my poor Renaudie, and as a brother, I beg of you to renounce your enterprise, and lay down your arms.”

“Really!” said Renaudie, ironically.

“Yes,” said Gabriel, advancing, “it is the advice of a friend, I swear to you. Castlenau has surrendered to M. de Nemours this morning, and if you do not follow his example, you are lost.”

“Ah! M. de Montgomery, and are you also one of them?”

“I am not with them—I stand between you.”

“I did not mean to offend you, count; I cannot doubt you.”

“Believe me then, and do not risk a useless and fatal combat.”

“Impossible!”

"But know," said Pardaillau, "that we are only a small advanced guard."

"And I, do you think that I have only this handful of brave fellows to rely on?"

"I warn you that you have traitors in your camp, and I undertake to procure your pardon from M. de Guise."

"My pardon! I trust rather to give than to receive pardon."

"Renaudie, Renaudie, you will not make me turn my sword against you—my old playmate."

"It must be, Pardaillau—I cannot yield the field."

"You are wrong, Renaudie," said Gabriel; but he was suddenly interrupted, for the troops were growing impatient at this long parley, and one of the Huguenots fired a pistol at one of the king's men.

"It was without my orders," said Renaudie, "but never mind, the die is cast. Come! my friends—forward!"

The action commenced. Gabriel had his plume carried off, and his horse killed under him, and he drew a little to one side and looked mournfully on. The Huguenots, inferior in numbers and discipline, were fast giving way. When Renaudie found himself near Pardaillau—"Here!" cried he, "let me die at least by your hand."

"Ah!" cried Pardaillau, "he who kills the other will be the most generous."

They attacked each other, and for some time fought without advantage to either, but at last Renaudie's sword entered Pardaillau's breast. Renaudie uttered a cry of despair, but at the same moment Pardaillau's page fired at him and wounded him mortally. Round their dead bodies the fight raged fiercely for a short time longer, but the Huguenots were at last overpowered. Numbers of them were killed—some made prisoners—and the rest put to flight.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

THE TUMULT AT AMBOISE.

STILL a large number of the conspirators had not been warned, but continued their way towards Amboise for the attack which had been arranged for that night, where, as we know, they were expected. The young king would not go to bed, but, uneasy and restless, paced up and down his room. The queen, the duke, and the cardinal were with him.

"What a long night!" said the king. "I suffer—my head is on fire—and the dreadful pains in my ears begin again to torture me."

"Oh!" cried Marie, "do not agitate yourself so much, I pray. You augment the pain of your body by that of your mind. Let me beg you to take some minutes of repose."

"How can I repose, Marie, while my people rebel, and arm themselves against me? Ah! all these cares will surely abridge the little life that God has granted to me."

Marie could only reply with her tears.

"Do not agitate yourself so much, sire," said the duke; "have we not made a happy commencement—Castlenau a prisoner, and Renaudie dead?"

"Oh! very happy," cried the king.

So the night passed. Then six o'clock struck and day began to appear. "Really," said the king, "I begin to hope that the Huguenots are not coming."

"So much the worse," said the duke, "for we should have crushed this rebellion." But as he spoke, they heard cries of "To arms." "Here they are," cried he; "sire, rely on me," and he rushed from the room.

The king grew more agitated than ever. "I can

scarcely believe in so much audacity," said he. "Such an affront to the crown."

"Good heavens!" cried Marie, as the firing was heard.

A terrible explosion followed, and tumultuous cries.

"I believe," said François, "that the rebels have scaled the walls."

"Will your majesty not retire to a safer part of the castle?" said the cardinal, who was trembling with fear.

"I—I hide from my subjects? Let them come in if they dare."

"Sire," said Marie, "for heaven's sake, be prudent."

"No, Marie, I do not move."

The time passed, and the firing grew nearer. The king wrung his hands with anger.

"Oh!" cried Marie, "no one comes to tell us anything."

"This suspense is intolerable!" exclaimed the king; "I would rather go out myself."

"Oh! François, do not think of it, ill as you are."

"I feel ill no longer."

"Stay, sire, I am sure the noise lessens; the firing seems further off."

At this moment a page entered. "Sire, I am sent by the duke to announce that the rebels are in retreat."

"Oh! I thought it was nothing," said the cardinal.

"How quickly your courage has revived, uncle."

A second loud explosion made the cardinal tremble again, but immediately after Captain Richelieu entered, sword in hand, and his face black with powder. "Sire," said he, "the rebels have taken flight, and had just time to explode, without hurting us, a mass of powder which they had placed near one of the doors. Those who have not been taken or killed, have repassed the bridge, and have barricaded themselves in a house in the Faubourg du Vendomois, where they will be an easy prey. Your majesty may see from this window."

The king ran to the window, followed by the queen and cardinal.

"Yes, I see them besieged in turn!" cried he. "But what do I see? Smoke issuing from the house!"

"Yes, sire, we have set it on fire."

"Capital!" cried the cardinal. "See, sire, how they jump from the window. Do you hear their cries?"

"Poor people!" cried Marie, clasping her hands; "see! the flames increase, the house will fall on them."

"It falls!" cried the king.

"Oh! let us quit the place, sire; it makes me ill," said Marie.

"Yes, I pity them now."

The duke now entered, calm and proud, "Sire, all is finished," said he, "and the rebels have paid the penalty of their crime. I thank God for having delivered your majesty from this peril—greater than I thought at first, for it seems that we had traitors amongst us."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, sire. At the first assault, the Huguenots were aided by the men-at-arms under La Motte, who attacked us behind; thus they were masters for a short time."

"It is frightful!" cried Marie, pressing against the king.

"It would have been far more so, madam, had the rebels been aided, as they expected, by an attack that Chaudieu was to have made on another door."

"Then this attack failed?"

"It never took place, madam. Captain Chaudieu fortunately was not in time, and will arrive only to see his friends destroyed; and in order to greet him, I have ordered them to hang twenty or thirty of the men from the battlements of the castle."

"Let us now go to the chapel," said the king, "and return thanks for our deliverance."

"And afterwards," said the cardinal, "we will decide upon the punishment of the surviving criminals. Sire, you will be present with the queen?"

"But—— Is that necessary?"

"It is indispensable, sire. Your glorious grandfather, Francis the First, always assisted at the burning of heretics. As for the King of Spain——"

"Other kings do as they please, and so will I."

"We rely on your presence, sire; your majesty cannot be absent."

"Mon Dieu! we will speak of this another time. The accused are not condemned yet."

"Sire, they are."

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

THE EXECUTION.

ALTHOUGH the conspirators had inserted in their manifestoes a protestation that they would attempt nothing against the king, the princes of the blood, or the safety of the kingdom, yet they had been taken in open revolt, and the proceedings against them were pushed by the cardinal with a truly ecclesiastical if not Christian earnestness. They dispensed with vain formalities for the lesser criminals whom they hung daily at Amboise, without troubling the Parliament. The forms of justice were only granted to people of some quality and renown. At last, thanks to this pious zeal, all was concluded in less than three weeks. The 15th April was fixed for the public execution at Amboise of twenty-seven barons, eleven counts, and seven marquises. They neglected nothing to give this singular religious ceremony all possible éclat and pomp.

Immense preparations were made. From Paris to Nantes, they stimulated public curiosity by the means in use at that period, that is to say, announcing it from the pulpit. Three elegant stands, of which the center one—the most sumptuous—was reserved for the royal family, were placed at the foot of the erection where the bloody spectacle was to take place. All around, benches and seats were occupied by the faithful from the neighborhood; even those who did not wish to attend were driven to it by menaces and bribery, so that, on the eve of the fatal day, more than ten thousand people had been forced to encamp in the fields. Early in the morning even the roofs were covered, and windows were let at enormous prices.

A vast scaffold, covered with black, had been raised, and the place was guarded by the troops. After a solemn mass in the Chapel St. Florentin, they led out the condemned, several of whom had already undergone torture. Catholic priests were in attendance, who endeavored to induce them to renounce their religion, but they all refused even to reply.

The king and queen had with much difficulty been persuaded to appear at the last to witness the execution of the principal chiefs. Poor crowned slaves, they had been frightened into it.

At noon the execution commenced. As the first ascended the steps of the scaffold, his companions sang a psalm loudly, as well to encourage him as to mark their constancy. A verse accompanied each head that fell, although each made a voice the less to join. At one o'clock there only remained twelve gentlemen, the chiefs of the rebellion. Then the king appeared looking more than pale—he was livid. Marie was at his right, and Catherine at his left. No acclamations greeted his arrival, and he said—

"Ah! M. le Cardinal, you see you did wrong to bring me here."

The cardinal waved his hand as a signal, and a few faint cries of "Vive le roi!" were heard. The Duc de Nemours stood by in great agitation. It will be remembered that Castlenau had surrendered on his pledged word that the lives of himself and those with him should be spared, and when he first saw that it was about to be violated, he had successively implored the duke and cardinal—the king and queen, but had been answered through the chancellor, that a king was not bound to keep faith with rebel subjects.

He, as well as Gabriel, who stood near him had been brought there by a faint hope of saving Castlenau at the last. After a quarter of an hour, only four remained. The usher then cried, "Albert Edmund, Comte de Mazerès, guilty of heresy and high treason."

"It is false!" cried the count. Then, showing the people his arms broken and blackened by the torture, "See!" said he, "the state to which they have reduced me in the king's name, but I know that he was ignorant of it, and I cry none the less, 'Vive le roi!'"

His head fell while his brothers sang their verse.

Then was called, "Jean Louis Alberic, Baron de Raunay, guilty of heresy and high treason."

"A lie!" cried he. "It was the Duc de Guise and the cardinal, alone, whom we attacked. I trust they will die as tranquilly as I do." And he laid his head on the block.

Then came Robert Jean Briquemont, Comte de Vil-mougis, against whom the same charge was made.

He dipped his hands into the blood of Raunay, and raising them to heaven, cried, "Father in heaven, Thou wilt take vengeance for the blood of thy children," and he fell.

There now remained only Castlenau, who advanced, singing. The Duc de Nemours had bribed the executioner to delay while he tried one last effort. He turned to Catherine, and said, "Can we not save this last, madam?"

"I can do nothing," said she, turning away her head.

Even the crowd were moved as Castlenau mounted the steps, still singing, and cried loudly, "Mercy, mercy."

Gabriel rushed forward, and holding up his hands to Marie, cried, "Pity, Madame la Reine."

She turned round, and bending on her knee to the king, said, "Sire, I beg you to pardon this last one."

"Sire," cried the Duc de Nemours, "has not enough of flood flowed?"

"Sire," said the cardinal, "remember your duties."

"Yes, I do," said the king; "I pardon the Baron de Castlenau."

But the cardinal, feigning to misunderstand, had made a sign so imperative to the executioner, that while the king still spoke, Castlenau's head rolled on the scaffold.

CHAPTER XC.

THE KING'S ILLNESS.

FROM this time the health of the king grew rapidly worse, and at the expiration of seven months, towards the end of November, 1560, he was obliged to take to his bed.

Two or three nights after, Marie stood by his bedside, watching, weeping, and praying. Near them were seated Catherine de Medicis and the Cardinal de Lorraine. Catherine had not been idle during these last seven months, but, in her hatred of the Guises, had allied her-

self with the Prince de Condé, Antoine de Bourbon, and even the Constable Mortmorency. These new and strange friends, excited by her, had fomented insurrections in different provinces. But the Guises had convoked the States-General at Orleans, and had summoned to them the King of Navarre and the prince.

Catherine had endeavored to dissuade them from going, but the cardinal had obtained the promise of the king for their safety, and they came. Immediately on their arrival they were thrown into prison, and the prince tried and condemned to death by an extraordinary commission. They only waited for the signature of the chancellor, who still held out, to carry out the sentence.

If the king could live but two or three days more the Prince de Condé would be executed, and Catherine exiled, and the Guises would reign alone. If he died before they had disposed of their enemies, they would be in a very different position. Thus these two watched, not so much for the life or death of the king, as for the triumph or defeat of their party.

"Softer, my uncle, I beg," said Marie, as the cardinal spoke, "you will wake the king. See! you have woke him."

"Marie, where are you?" said the feeble voice of François.

"Here, by you, dear François."

"Oh, how I suffer—my head is like fire. This constant pain, I suffer even in sleep. Oh! I am dying."

"Do not say so, François."

"My memory fails me—have I received the sacrament?"

"Yes, all your duties have been performed; do not torment yourself."

"I wish to see my confessor."

"He shall be here immediately."

"Have they prayed for me?"

"I have scarcely ceased since morning."

"Poor dear Marie!"

"Your mother and the cardinal are here—do you wish to see them?"

"No, no, only you, Marie. Turn a little, that I may see you better."

"Courage, dear François. God is good, and I pray always."

"But I suffer so—I can see no longer. Your hand, Marie."

"Lean on me."

"My soul to God—my heart to you, Marie. Alas! to die at seventeen. Do not weep so, Marie; we shall meet above. In all this world I regret nothing but you—if I could take you with me I should be happy to die. But you—what will you do without me?"

"But you shall not die; I have still a great hope—a chance in which I have much faith."

"What is that?" said Catherine, advancing in astonishment.

"Yes, I believe all these physicians to be ignorant, and I have sent for one—a skilful man, who saved my uncle's life at Calais."

"M. Ambroise Paré?"

"Yes; they all said that he ought not to have the royal life in his hands; that he was a heretic and could not be confided in."

"That is certain," said Catherine.

"But I confide in him, and I have sent a sure friend for him. I know he will come soon."

"And who is this friend?"

"M. de Montgomery, madam."

CHAPTER XCI.

A GLEAM OF HOPE.

As she spoke, Madame Dazette entered and announced the Comte de Montgomery.

"Oh! let him enter," said Marie.

"One moment, madam," said Catherine; "before this man enters, let me, at least, leave the room. If it pleases you to confide the life of the son to him who killed the father, it does not please me to remain and see it, and I protest against his presence here." Then she left the room without even casting a look on her dying son. She only went, however, into the adjoining room, leaving the door open that she might hear all that passed.

"Well?" cried Marie, as Gabriel entered.

"Madam, he is here."

"Thanks, faithful friend."

"Is the king then worse, madam?" asked Gabriel, casting an anxious look on the pale form extended before him.

"Alas! he is at least no better. Pray let M. Paré come in."

Marie ran to him as he entered and led him to the bed, saying, "Thank you for coming at once, monsieur. I count on your zeal and science."

François lay exhausted by suffering, and with hardly sufficient strength even to groan. M. Paré looked earnestly at his pale thin face, then touched gently the swelling of the right ear, where the pain lay.

"Oh! I suffer," murmured the king.

M. Paré asked for a light to be brought near. The queen brought it herself and held it while he tenderly

examined the seat of the malady. Then he drew back, grave and thoughtful. Marie tremblingly examined his countenance without daring to speak.

At last, unable to bear this silence, she cried, "What! is there no hope?"

"There is but one, madam."

"Then there is one?"

"Yes, it exists, and I should have great hope, if——"

"If what?"

"If the patient were not the king, madam?"

"Oh! treat him like the meanest of his subjects."

"But if I fail—and God only has the disposal of life and death—will they not accuse me, a Huguenot, of having caused his death? This terrible responsibility would make my hand tremble, when it should be most firm."

"Listen. If he lives I will bless you all my life, and if he dies I will defend you to my last breath. So try, I implore you. Since you say it is the only chance, would it not be a crime to withhold your aid?"

"You are right, madam, and I will try, if I am permitted; for I do not conceal from you that the method I should employ is extreme, unusual, and, in appearance, violent and dangerous."

"Really!" cried Marie, trembling; "and is there no other?"

"None; and there must be no delay. In twenty-four hours it may be too late. There is a deposit formed in the head of the king, and if immediate issue be not given to it by an operation, it would overflow the brain, and cause death."

"Would you operate at once?" said the cardinal.

"I should not like to take the entire responsibility on myself."

"Ah! you doubt already. But, no——"

"I must have daylight. To-morrow morning, at nine

o'clock, I will be here. You be here also, madam, and you, M. le Cardinal, and the Duc de Guise, or any one whose devotion to the king is certain ; but, if possible, no doctors. Then I will explain my idea, and, if you authorize me, I will try it."

"And until to-morrow?" said Marie.

"Give the king this, madam. It will send him into a profound sleep, and be careful that it is not interrupted."

"I will watch myself ; I will not leave this place to-night."

"Do so, madam, for it is important. And now I will leave you to prepare for my great work."

"Monsieur, I thank you much ; and you, also, M. de Montgomery, for your zeal and devotion: Will you accompany M. Paré to-morrow?"

"I will, madam."

"And I, also, will be there," said Catherine to herself, "for this man is capable of saving the king—the fool—and ruining his party, the prince, and me."

CHAPTER XCII.

SLEEP WELL GUARDED.

MARIE gave the king the sleeping potion as directed, and had the pleasure of seeing him fall into a peaceful slumber. "Now, uncle," said she, "there is nothing to detain you here, for I mean to watch until the king wakes. Go and get some repose."

"No ; my brother, whom business has kept away till now, told me that he would come the last thing, and inquire after the king, and I promised that he should find me here. But stay, is not that his step?"

"Oh! do not let him make a noise," said she, running into the ante-room to caution him.

The duke entered pale and agitated. He did not even ask after the king, but bowing to Marie, drew his brother aside to speak to him. "Terrible news!" said he.

"What is it?"

"The Constable de Montmorency has quitted Chantilly with 1500 men, and will be at the gates of Orleans to-morrow. I have just been informed of it."

"That is terrible indeed. He comes to save his nephew, of course?"

"And all the people of Orleans are disaffected—Huguenots or Bourbonites. How is the king?"

"Bad; but Ambroise Paré, who has arrived at the queen's invitation, hopes still to save him by a hazardous experiment, but which will, probably, have happy results. Be here at nine o'clock to support M. Paré if needful."

"Certainly; for it is our best hope. But how I should like to send to the constable the head of his fine nephew, the Prince de Condé, to greet him."

"And the chancellor still holds out. But if we could get the king's signature, would not that suffice?"

"It is not strictly legal, but it would do."

"Well, leave it all to me. It is two o'clock, and you have need of repose. Leave to me the care of our fortunes."

"What are you about to do? Take no decisive step without at least consulting me."

"Be easy. If I get what I want, I will come very early and consult with you."

"Well then, I will go, for, in truth, I am exhausted."

He said a few words of condolence to Marie, and then retired.

The cardinal sat down to a table, and made a copy of

the sentence of the commission who had tried M. de Condé, and then rose.

Marie advanced towards him, and said, "What are you about to do?"

"Madam, it is indispensable that the king should sign this paper."

"What is indispensable is, that the king sleeps."

"His name to this, and I will importune him no more."

"I cannot permit you to awaken him; besides, he is incapable of holding a pen."

"I will hold it for him."

"I have said I will not allow it."

The cardinal stopped for a moment; then he resumed, in an insinuating tone, "Listen, madam—my dear niece. I will tell you what it is; you may be sure I would respect the king's sleep, were I not constrained by weighty motives. It is our fortune—our safety and yours—that is in question. If the king do not sign this paper before daybreak, we are lost."

"I cannot help it."

"But, once more—our ruin is yours, child that you are."

"What do I care for your ambitions? My ambition is to save him—to preserve his life if I can—to guard his precious sleep. M. Paré has confided his repose to me, and I forbid you to trouble it. Listen to me in turn—I forbid it. The king dead, my royalty dies. I care not much for that; but while he has a breath of life, I will protect it against these odious intrigues. I have contributed, my uncle, more than I ought, to strengthen the power in your hands when François was well, but this power I resume at once, when it concerns, perhaps, the last few hours of calm which God has granted to him in this life. The king will need all his strength for to-morrow, and no one in the world shall rob him of it."

"But when the motive is so grave and urgent——"

"No one shall awaken the king under any pretext, however urgent."

"Oh ! but it must be ; the interests of the State come before sentiment. The signature of the king is necessary, and I will have it ;" and he attempted to advance.

But Marie stood before him, and barred the door. They looked at each other with flashing eyes.

"I will pass," said he.

"You dare to lay a hand on me !"

"My niece."

"No, monsieur, your queen !" This was said in a tone so firm, that the cardinal drew back. "Yes, your queen !" continued she ; "and if you attempt to advance, while you go to the king, I will go to that door ; and, uncle, minister, and cardinal though you are, I will summon the guard, and have you arrested for high treason immediately."

"What a scandal !"

"It will be your doing, monsieur." She looked at once so firm, so agitated, and so beautiful, that even this man of bronze gave way.

"Well, then," said he, with a deep sigh, "I will wait till he wakes."

"Thank you," said Marie, quietly.

"But at least the moment he does wake——"

"If he be in a state to understand you, uncle, I will oppose you no further."

The cardinal was obliged to be satisfied. He returned to his chair, and Marie to her prie-dieu ; but the long hours of the night passed, and the king did not wake. It was long since he had slept so well. Once or twice he moved, and uttered a groan, and the cardinal started up, but was obliged to sit down again, disappointed, crushing the paper impatiently in his hands. The lights began to burn low, and the cold light of the winter morning to

appear. At last, as eight o'clock struck, the king opened his eyes, and called,—

“Marie, are you there?”

“Always,” answered she.

The cardinal rushed forward with the paper in his hand. It was yet, perhaps, time—a scaffold was soon erected—but, at the same instant, Catherine de Medicis entered. “Too late!” thought he. “Ah! fortune abandons us: if M. Paré does not save the king, we are lost.”

CHAPTER XCIII.

THE ROYAL DEATH-BED.

CATHERINE had not been idle during the night. She had invited a large number of her partisans, and all the royal physicians, to be at nine o'clock in the ante-chamber of the king's bedroom.

She now advanced to the king's bed, and, after kissing his hand, sat down. The Duc de Guise entered soon after.

“You have done nothing?” said he to his brother.

“Alas! I could not. Have you news of Montmorency?”

“No; he is perhaps now at the gates of the city. If Paré fail, adieu to our fortunes.”

The doctors sent for by the queen-mother now arrived, and they were led by her to the bed. The sufferings and groans of the patient had recommenced, and they examined him again, and then retired to consult. One proposed a poultice, others recommended the injection of a lotion into the ear, and they had just decided on this when M. Paré entered.

His fame was now beginning to be established, so the physicians told him what they had decided upon.

"The remedy is insufficient," said he, "and yet time presses ; the brain will soon be affected."

"Oh ! hasten then, in heaven's name," cried Marie.

Catherine and the Guises each now approached the doctors, and spoke to them.

"Have you, then," said Chapelain, the first physician, to Paré, "a better remedy to propose?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"We must trepan the king."

"Trepan the king!" cried the doctors, with horror.

"What sort of an operation is this?" said the duke.

"It is little known yet, monseigneur," said Paré ; "but it consists in making, with an instrument invented by me, an opening in the head the size of a shilling."

"Good heavens!" cried Catherine. "On the king's head you would dare——"

"Yes, madam."

"But it would be an assassination."

"Madam, how many heads are cut open in battle—not skilfully, but violently—and yet we cure the wound."

"Well," said the cardinal, "do you answer for the king's life?"

"God alone holds life and death in His hands, monseigneur. All I can say is, that this is the last chance of saving the king."

"Have you ever performed this operation with success, M. Paré?" said the duke.

"Yes, monseigneur ; a short time ago on a M. Bretesche, Rue de la Harpe ; and once at the siege of Calais, on M. de Fienne."

"Yes, I remember. Well, I hesitate no longer.—I give my consent to the operation."

"And I," said Marie.

"And not I," said Catherine.

"Not, madam, when you hear that it is our last chance?"

"Who says so? M. Paré, a heretic. The other doctors do not."

"No, madam," said Chapelain, "we protest against it."

"Ah! you see."

The duke, who was greatly agitated, led Catherine aside, and said, "Madam, I understand; you wish your son to die, and the Prince de Condé to live. You are in league with the Bourbons, and even with Montmorency; I know all. But take care—I warn you."

But Catherine was not to be intimidated. She escaped from him, ran to the door, and called the chancellor, who was waiting there by her orders. "M. de l'Hôpital," said she, "they are about to authorize a cruel and hazardous operation on the king, and I—his mother—and the physicians protest against it. Register my declaration."

"Shut that door!" cried the duke. And in spite of the murmurs of the gentlemen collected outside, Gabriel did as the duke ordered.

The chancellor alone remained.

"Now, M. de l'Hôpital," said the duke; "know that this operation alone can save the life of the king, and that the queen and I authorize it, and that I answer for the skill of the surgeon."

"And I," said Paré, "accept all the responsibility that they desire to impose upon me. Let them take my life, if I do not save the king's. But alas! it is full time—look at his majesty."

François, indeed, livid and motionless, seemed no longer to hear or understand. He was not even sensible of the caresses of Marie.

"Oh! hasten, in pity's name!" cried she. "Try only to save his life, and I will protect you."

"So be it," said Paré. "Leave me, gentlemen; I have

need of the greatest calm." He then took out his instruments, and had already leaned over towards the patient, when an immense tumult was heard, and the Constable de Montmorency burst in, followed by a crowd of gentlemen.

"I come à propos!" cried he, and they all rushed towards the bed.

Even by force it was no longer possible to be masters of the royal chamber.

"I retire," cried Paré, in despair.

"M. Paré, I, the queen, order you to proceed," said Marie.

"Ah! madam, I told you I must have quiet, and look here. M. Chapelain, try your injection."

"It is all ready," said Chapelain, and immediately, assisted by the others, he injected his preparation into the ear of the king. Marie stood by, in despair.

Then François, after a few moments, rose suddenly, opened his eyes, and tried to speak, but fell back, dead.

"Oh! madam, you have killed your son," cried Marie, rushing wildly towards Catherine.

Catherine looked at her with a glance full of the hatred which she had restrained so long. "You, my dear," she said, "have no longer the right to speak thus, for you are no longer queen. Oh! yes, queen in Scotland; we will send you to reign among your mists."

Marie Stuart, unable to bear more, fell sobbing and almost fainting, beside the bed.

"Monsieur," said Catherine to the duke, "the States-General, which was all in your hands just now, belong at present to us. It has been agreed between M. de Bourbon and myself, that he is to be lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and that I shall be regent; but, as you are still grand master—fulfil your duty, and announce the king's death. And you, Madame de Fiesque, bring in M. le Duc d'Orléans."

Then the Duc de Guise cried, in a hollow voice, "The king is dead!"

The king at arms repeated after him, "The king is dead! Pray for his soul," and immediately the first gentleman answered, "Vive le roi!"

At the same moment, Madame de Fiesque entered, leading the Duc d'Orléans. Catherine took him by the hand, while all the courtiers cried, "Vive Charles the Ninth!"

"Alas!" said Marie, kissing the cold hand of François, "there is no one that grieves for you but me."

"And I, madam," said Gabriel, advancing.

"Oh! thanks," said Marie, with an eloquent glance.

"Perhaps, I shall do more than deplore," added he; "perhaps I shall avenge him, in avenging myself."

Even he thought of himself in the presence of the dead.

CHAPTER XCIV.

ADIEU FRANCE.

EIGHT months after the death of François, on the 15th August, 1561, Marie Stuart was about to embark for Scotland. These eight months she had disputed day by day, and almost hour by hour, with Catherine de Medicis, and even with her uncles, who, for different reasons, wished her gone. But Marie could not bear to leave the country where she had been so happy and so loved. She had first retired to Rheims, near her uncle the cardinal; but the growing troubles in Scotland required her presence there, and, on the other hand, the almost passionate admiration which Charles the Ninth, still a child, manifested for his sister-in-law, disquieted Catherine, and determined her more than ever to get rid of Marie.

She was obliged, therefore, to resign herself to say adieu to France. Her regrets have descended to posterity in the well-known verses preserved by Brantome, who accompanied her to Scotland.

On the day after her departure, Gabriel set off for St. Quentin, to which he had been summoned by a letter from Diana. He had delayed one day after he had received the letter, for the purpose of paying his last respects to Marie Stuart as she embarked.

At the gate of St. Quentin he met Jean Peuquoy, who was waiting for him. "Ah! there you are, M. le Comte," said he. "I was sure you would come, but it is unfortunately too late."

"How too late?" said Gabriel, alarmed.

"Did not the letter of Madame de Castro request you to come yesterday?"

"Yes; but without giving a reason, or making any point of it."

"Well, M. le Comte, it was yesterday that she pronounced the irrevocable vows which separate her forever from the world."

Gabriel turned pale.

"If you had been here, you might perhaps have prevented it," continued Jean.

"No," said Gabriel, sadly, "I should not have dared to oppose it. It was doubtless the will of God, which detained me at Calais. My heart would have been torn at my inability to prevent this sacrifice, and she would have suffered more from my presence than from being alone."

"Oh! she was not alone, her mother was with her."

"What! Madame de Poitiers?"

"Yes, comte, her daughter wrote to her to announce her intention, and she came at once."

"What could make her come?"

"Monsieur, she is, after all, her mother."

"I do not think she could come for any good—not to fulfil a duty. But let us go to the convent, M. Jean; I must see Diana."

Gabriel was expected, and immediately admitted. Diana and her mother were together. Gabriel, seeing Diana after so long an absence, by an irresistible impulse, threw himself upon his knees before the grating which now separated them forever. "My sister," cried he.

"My brother," she answered, while a tear coursed slowly down her cheek, but she smiled like an angel.

Madame de Poitiers, beside her, laughed like a demon. "It is, doubtless, as your sister in God, monsieur, that you so address Madame de Castro," said she.

"What do you mean, madam?" said Gabriel, rising, with a shudder.

Diana de Poitiers turned to her daughter, "My child," said she, "I will now confide to you a secret which I think it my duty to conceal no longer. It was not only to bless you, my child, that I left the retirement, where, thanks to M. de Montgomery, I have lived for the last two years. I believe that yesterday I could with a word have arrested the vows on your lips; but how could I, a poor sinner, take from God a soul so devoted to him? So I was silent. But to-day I break this silence, because I see, from the grief and ardor of M. de Montgomery, that you still occupy all his thoughts. Now it is necessary that he should forget you, and if he still nurses the illusion that you are his sister—the daughter of the Comte de Montgomery—he will let his thoughts fly to you without remorse. It would be a crime which I cannot sanction; therefore, know, my child, that you are really the daughter of Henry the Second, whom M. de Montgomery killed at the tournament."

"Horrible!" cried Diana, hiding her face in her hands. "You lie! madam," said Gabriel, passionately. "You

must lie. What proofs have you that you speak the truth?"

"This," replied she, quietly taking a paper from her bosom. "It is," continued she, "a letter from your father, written a few days before his imprisonment, as you may see, in which he complains of my rigor, as you may also see, but consoles himself by thinking that I shall soon be his wife. The terms of this letter are clear, I hope. Therefore, you see that it will be impious of you to think any more of Diana, for she is not united to you by any ties of blood. By sparing you this impiety, I trust I have acquitted my debt towards you, and paid you for the happiness which you have procured for me in my solitude."

Gabriel meanwhile had read the letter, which was, indeed, all she had said. It was like a voice from the dead to reveal the truth. When the unfortunate young man raised his eyes, he saw Diana de Castro lying fainting on the ground. Instinctively he rushed towards her, but was stopped by the bars. He turned and saw Madame de Poitiers with a smile on her lips; he could bear no more, but crying, "Adieu, Diana," rushed from the room.

Outside the convent, Jean Peuquoy was waiting for him. "Do not speak to me—ask me nothing," cried Gabriel. Then, seeing Jean looking at him with astonishment—"Pardon me," said he, "I believe I am nearly mad. I dare not think or speak of her. Come with me to the gate—if you will—I must return to Paris."

Jean Peuquoy walked with him and endeavored to distract his thoughts by telling him of Babette—how well and happy she was—how he was once more prospering at St. Quentin, and that he had recently had news of Martin Guerre. But Gabriel did not hear him.

Still, when they came to the gate, he pressed his hand warmly, and said, "Adieu, friend, and thanks for your

kindness. Remember me to all, and you, who are happy, think sometimes of me who suffer," and without waiting for any further answer than the tears which shone in Jean's eyes, he mounted his horse and galloped away.

On his arrival at Paris he went straight to Admiral Coligny. "Monsieur," said he, "I feel sure that the persecutions and religious wars will recommence before long. Henceforward, I offer myself to your cause, not only in heart but with my sword. My life is yours for the future."

Gabriel's history from this time was that of the religious wars which rendered the reign of Charles the Ninth so sanguinary. He played a terrible part in them, and his name often made Catherine tremble. At the battle of Dreux, where he performed prodigies, he wounded M. de Montmorency, and at the battle of St. Denis, where the constable fell by a pistol shot, M. de Montgomery was recognized as the man who fired.

He himself seemed invulnerable. We may read in De Thou how Gabriel at last, betrayed by one of his men, took refuge in the tower of Domfroit, which he defended for twelve days with only fifty men, against Matignon with two regiments, 600 horse, and powerful artillery. When all hope was lost, Gabriel wished to kill himself, to avoid falling alive into the hands of his enemies, but Matignon swore to him that if he would surrender his life should be spared. On this he surrendered. He should have remembered Castlenau.

The same day he was sent, bound, to Paris. Catherine de Medicis held him at last; Charles the Ninth had just died, and they were awaiting the arrival of Henry the Third from Poland, and she was queen regent and all-powerful. He was condemned to death on the 26th of June, 1674. For fourteen years he had fought against the wife and son of Henry the Second.

On the 27th, after undergoing the question extraordinary, he was carried to the scaffold and beheaded, Catherine being present at the execution.

Diana de Castro had died in the previous year—Abbess of the Benedictines at St. Quentin.

THE END.

THE PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE

THE PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN SEEN FROM THE GREAT
TOWER OF HESLIN-FERT ON THE 5TH OF MAY, 1555.

LET those of our readers who do not fear a leap of three centuries follow us at once into the midst of the events and personages of our history.

We are at the 5th of May, 1555. Henry the Second reigns over France, Queen Mary over England, and Charles the Fifth over the whole vast extent of Spain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the Indies.

We find ourselves at the little town of Heslin-Fert, which Emmanuel Philibert, Prince of Piedmont, has just built in the place of Heslin-le-Vieux, which he sacked and destroyed a year ago. We are therefore in that part of old France then called Artois, and now known as the Pas-de-Calais.

We say of old France, for though Artois had been united to the French territory by Philip Augustus in 1180, it had been bestowed by Saint Louis on his brother Robert in 1237, and had formed the dowry of his daughter Marguerite on her marriage with Louis de Male, and with their daughter it had passed into the hands of the dukes of Burgundy; and at last, on the death of Charles the Bold, his widow, Marie of Burgundy, carried our poor little province, together with the immense riches and estates left by her husband, to swell the possessions of Maximilian of Austria, where they were lost like a drop of water in the ocean.

Still, it was a great loss for France, for Artois was a fair and fertile province; and thus for three long years Henry the Second and Charles had struggled, with varying fortunes, but with unflinching determination—the former to regain, the latter to retain it.

During this desperate war Charles the Fifth had been forced to abandon the siege of Metz in disorder, and had lost Mariembourg, Bouvines, and Dinant; but, on the other hand, he had carried Therouanne and Heslin by assault, and, furious at his defeat at Metz, he had burned one and razed the other to the ground.

In the action before the walls of Metz an army of sixty-five thousand men had been decimated by cold, sickness, and last, but not least, by the troops of the Duke de Guise, and when the survivors took to flight they left behind them ten thousand dead,

two thousand tents, and a hundred and twenty pieces of cannon.

The rout had been so complete that the fugitives had not even sought to defend themselves, and when Charles de Bourbon was pursuing one of the flying bodies of Spanish cavalry, their captain turned his horse, and, riding up to the French officer:

“Whether you be a prince, or a simple gentleman,” said he, “if you fight for glory, seek some other occasion, for now you are slaughtering men who are not only too feeble to resist, but without strength to escape.”

Charles de Bourbon sheathed his sword, and sounded a recall, and the Spaniards continued their flight without further molestation.

Charles the Fifth had no notion of imitating his rival's generosity, and, after the capture of Therouanne, he gave up the town to pillage, and then razed it to the ground, respecting neither churches nor monasteries, and finally called in the peasants of Flanders and Artois to scatter the fragments, lest, by any accident, he might happen to leave one stone standing upon another.

Heslin had met the same fate as Therouanne.

But this time Emmanuel Philibert had been appointed to the command of the imperial troops in the Low Countries, and, not being able to save Therouanne, he had determined, at all events, to rebuild Heslin.

A few months of incessant labor had accomplished this, and raised amid the marshes of Mesnil that

town which, a hundred and fifty years later, so greatly excited the admiration of Vauban for the perfection of its fortifications.

The founder had called this new town Heslin-Fert, in memory of its origin; that is to say, he had added to its name the four letters which the Emperor of Germany had given to Amadis of Savoy after his successful defense of Rhodes, and which signified "*Fortitudo ejus Rhodum tenuit*" (his courage saved Rhodes).

This, however, was not the only marvel effected by the young general. Thanks to the rigid discipline which he had established, the unlucky province was beginning to breathe freely after being devastated by four years of incessant war. The strictest orders for the suppression of all pillage and marauding had been issued and enforced; every officer offending was placed under arrest, every soldier taken in the act was hung.

The consequence was, that, as hostilities had almost ceased during the winter of 1554 and 1555, the inhabitants had regarded the last four or five months as something like a revival of the golden age.

It must be confessed that every now and then some farm or chateau was burned or sacked, either by the French, who held Abbeville, Doulens, and Montreuil-sur-Mer, and who occasionally made incursions into the enemy's country, or else by those incorrigible freebooters, the German mercenaries, who followed the imperial army; but Emmanuel Philibert made such good head against the one, and

inflicted such speedy punishment upon the others, that such catastrophes were becoming rarer every day.

This, then, was the state of Artois on the 5th of May, 1555.

And now, after giving our readers some idea of the moral and political state of the country, we must describe its natural aspect, which was very different then from what industry and cultivation have made it since.

Let us then imagine ourselves on the top of the great tower of Heslin-Fert, and allow our eyes to range from the northern extremity of the chain of hills which hide Bethune, right along their broken semi-circle to the last southern hillocks behind Dou-lens, and we should perceive that a little way in front of these two villages stands a rustic dwelling, half chateau, half farm, which bears the name of "The Park," and which seemed like a sentinel placed out in advance of his troop, but who does not altogether fancy the idea of being beyond the protection of his fellow-soldiers.

The high-road, like a long golden ribbon, passes in front of The Park, and winds among the bright green trees that border the somber forest, till at length it strikes in two directions, one leading sharply into Heslin, and the other following the margin of the wood, finding its way, not in a very straight line, it must be confessed, to the villages of Trevent, Auxe-le-Chateau, and Nouvioncu-Ponthieu.

The plain which extends from these three places

to Heslin lies exactly opposite to what we have formerly been describing; that is to say, it forms the left of the basin of Saint-Pol, and consequently lies on our right as we stand on the great tower of Heslin-Fert.

This plain forms the most interesting part of the view. Not that it has any very remarkable features of its own, but, on the contrary, because a temporary fictitious attraction is lent to it; for, as the opposing plain is carpeted with waving grass, so this one is covered from horizon to horizon by the white tents and floating banners of that great and gallant army which forms the pride and glory of its terrible commander, the Emperor Charles the Fifth.

In the center of this sea of tents, like some stately three-decker among the puny waves, towers the imperial pavilion, from whose corners hang four standards, any one of which might have satisfied the highest human ambition, for the imperial standard is paired with that of Rome, and the blazoned arms of Spain float in proud alliance with those of Lombardy, for the conqueror had been crowned four times.

He had been crowned at Toledo, with the diamond crown which belonged to the King of Spain and of the Indies. He had been crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle with the silver crown of the emperors of Germany; at Bologna with the golden crown which graced the heads of the Roman monarchs; and, lastly, with the iron crown of Lombardy: and when it was objected that he could not be crowned at Bologna, but that

he must go to Rome and Milan, when the pope refused to allow the golden crown to leave the Vatican, and when they quoted the decree of Charlemagne, declaring that the iron crown should never leave Monza, the haughty conqueror of Francis the First, of Solyman, and Luther, answered that he was not accustomed to go after crowns, but that crowns must come to him.

And, proudly surmounting these four standards, waved his own flag, which displayed the pillars of Hercules, not as the confines of the ancient world, but as the gates of the modern, and the ambitious device, "Plus ultra."

Some fifty paces from the emperor's pavilion rises the tent of his commander-in-chief, Emmanuel Philibert, which is only distinguished from those of the ordinary soldiery by the two standards which adorn it, one of which displays the silver cross of Savoy on its red ground, with the four letters "F. E. R. T.," and the other, Emmanuel's personal arms, a hand raising a trophy of lances, swords and pistols, with the motto, "Spoliatis arma supersunt." "The plundered has still his arms."

CHAPTER II.

THE ADVENTURERS.

ON this all-important 5th of May, a strange group was assembled in a natural cavern, which lay hid in brambles and brushwood in one of the most somber corners of the forest.

A sentinel was lying on the ground outside, watching with a careful eye every movement which took place in any leaf or blade of grass round the spot, as if fearing the approach of an enemy.

The cave was occupied by eight men, who differed from each other as widely as the north and south, in face, dress and character, but who appeared, from the arms they carried, to have all adopted the same calling.

One of them, whose face expressed cunning and sharpness, and whose fingers were covered with ink, from his efforts from time to time to free his pen from those hairs which were so plentiful in the ill-made paper of the period, was writing fast, a large stone making an admirable table; a second was standing like a statue by the side of the first, and holding a blazing pine torch by way of light, whose red smoky glare lighted up, not only the writer and his paper, but also cast fitful bursts of brilliant light upon the torch-bearer and his six companions.

That the writing was some agreement which interested the whole company was sufficiently proved by the eager countenances of almost every one.

Three of the men, however, appeared more engrossed in it than the rest.

The first was an elegant young man, who might be some twenty-five years of age. He was dressed in a beautiful buffalo-hide cuirass, which, if not ball-proof, was at least dagger-proof; under this he wore a tight-fitting jerkin of claret-colored velvet, somewhat faded, it is true, but still presentable, and the

sleeves were cut à *l'Espagnole*, that is to say, in the very latest fashion, as were also his green velvet breeches, which reached down to his great thigh-boots, such as the horsemen of the time delighted in.

The next was a man of about thirty-six, but whose face was so scarred and disfigured that it required a careful scrutiny to ascertain his age at all. One arm and a portion of the chest, which were naked, were not less cut about than his visage. He was engaged in binding up a wound in the biceps, and as the hurt was on the left arm, he was managing the operation, much to his satisfaction, by the aid of his teeth; he had in his hand some lint steeped in some marvelous unguent of which a gypsy had given him the recipe, and in which he seemed to have the most perfect confidence. As to the pain of his wound, he did not seem to trouble his head about that, more than if the injured member had been made of wood or cast iron.

The third was a tall, thin, ascetic-looking individual of middle age, who was kneeling in a corner telling his beads with a rapidity which would have done credit to the most active monk in the universe.

The three personages who remain have luckily less marked characteristics than those we have already noticed.

One of them was leaning his elbows on the stone which served the writer for a table, and followed the movements of the pen with his eyes, as a spider watches every motion of the fly which is to serve for his dinner. His face was a strange mixture of cun-

ning and common sense, knavery and good-fellowship. He might be about forty, for the thick eyebrows which shaded his deep-set eyes were already turning gray.

Another of our friends was lying at full length on his face, and was sharpening his dagger upon a stone, from which interesting occupation he would start up from time to time, as some particular clause in the all-important document failed to meet his approbation, and exclaiming, "I beg your pardon, but what was that you said?" at the same time suspending his dagger over the offending passage, and when it had been altered to suit his fancy, he would return to the sharpening of that useful instrument.

The last was leaning against the side of the cave, and gazing absently on the light that played and flickered over the gloomy roof. He seemed to be a dreamer and a poet.

Let us now give names to our portraits.

The scribe is called Procope: he is a Norman, and was educated for a lawyer, and he spiced his conversation with quotations from the laws of Rome and of Charlemagne. No sooner were instructions given him than they were proceeded on. If one trusted to his word, that was pure gold, but there might now and then be some doubt regarding the morality of his method of keeping it.

The individual who held the torch bore the name of Heinrich Scharfenstein. He was one of those worthy disciples of Luther whom Charles the Fifth's persecution of the Huguenots had driven into the

French ranks, which he had joined, together with his nephew Frantz, who was keeping watch at the mouth of the cave.

You would have fancied that these two collossi were animated by one mind and spirit. Some people might have fancied that one mind was not enough for two bodies of six feet four each; but if they had seen the Scharfensteins they would have altered their opinion. They rarely condescended to make use of any auxiliary, either in the shape of man, machine, or instrument. Instead of bothering their brains, like our modern wiseacres, as to the means by which Cleopatra transported Pompey's pillar, they surrounded the object to be moved with their four arms, and clasped it with their iron fingers, and making one joint effort with that regularity which distinguished all their movements, the object gradually left its place, and was conveyed to the wished-for locality. If an escalade was in hand, they dispensed with a ladder, which was an incumbrance in success, and must be thrown away in failure, and it was hard indeed if one of the giants, on the other's shoulders, could not get to the top of anything.

As to the young man who was twirling his black mustache and smoothing his beautiful curls, his name was Yvonnet, and he was a native of Paris and a most typical Parisian. Besides the physical advantages which we have already described, he had feet and hands as small and delicate as a girl's. In peace, this gentleman is perpetually complaining, and, like the Sybarite of old, he finds the fold of the rose leaf

hurts him. He is overwhelmed with laziness if he is wanted to walk, his head turns giddy in going upstairs, and he has a headache if it is necessary to think. But when he smells powder, and hears the bray of the trumpet, then comes a metamorphosis not mentioned by Ovid: nothing more is heard of laziness, giddiness, headache, *et hoc genus omne*; then the delicate youth becomes a ferocious soldier, cutting and thrusting like a demon, and fighting like a lion with steel claws and a wrought-iron backbone.

The one who was binding up his wounded arm was called Malemort, and his somber and melancholy mind has but one love, one joy, and that is fighting—a love which often defeats its own object; for at the commencement of the combat he immediately throws himself into it with such reckless fury that he pretty soon gets favored with some good cut or thrust which stretches him on the ground, where he lies groaning, not for the pain of his wound, but because he can no longer continue his favorite amusement. Luckily for him, his flesh has a wonderful power of healing, and he now boasts of five-and-twenty scars.

The skinny individual in the corner, telling his beads, is Lactance. He is a rigid Catholic, and can scarcely endure the presence of the Scharfensteins, whom he suspects of heresy. Being forced by his profession to fight against men and brothers, he puts them out of their pain as soon as possible; indeed, it is quite a pleasure to be killed by him, and he is always compelled to do penance to an indefinite

amount for the cruelties he has been guilty of; indeed if there be any time left after doing penance for those he killed yesterday, he does a little for those he is going to kill to-morrow.

The man with his arms on the table was better off once, but ran through all his property with extraordinary rapidity, and then took up the life of an adventurer. He is no bad hand with the sword and ax, and is as sharp as a needle, besides being a jolly companion to boot; and, besides, he can speak the patois of every province in the south of France, and could find his way blindfolded through the greater part of it.

Pilletrousse, who is sharpening his dagger, is an out-and-out mercenary; he has served Spaniards, English, and French with equal good-will, but the English bargained too hard, and the Spaniards omitted to pay, so he determined to set up in business for himself, and took to the road.

The ninth and last is Fracasso the poet, and, unlike Yvonnet, he loves the shade, he loves the night and the twinkling stars, and the reedy margin of the stream, and the hollow murmur of the sea. He follows the army of Henry the Second, although he is an Italian by birth. But every change of scene supplies him with fresh poetic ardor. Often in the middle of a fight Fracasso will stop to gaze on some floating clouds, or admire the tone of the bugle; and under such circumstances an unpoetic Englishman or Fleming will sometimes take occasion to favor him with an inch or two of cold iron. But woe be to

the rash individual; Fracasso's poetic inspirations have been destroyed, and he will certainly revenge them.

And now that we have described the company, let us relate the circumstances which brought them together.

CHAPTER III.

WHEREIN THE READER BECOMES BETTER ACQUAINTED
WITH THE HEROES OF THE LAST CHAPTER.

As soon as the arras gate of the little town of Doulens was opened on the morning of the 5th of May, 1555, four men slipped out and cautiously commenced proceeding along the bank of the Authie; their heavy cloaks might serve them as a protection against the cold morning wind, or might conceal arms, if necessary. They followed the stream to its source, and from thence branched off to the chain of hillocks which we have before spoken of, and entered the forest of Saint Pol-sur-Fernoise.

There, one of them who appeared more familiar with the locality than his companions, took the lead, and very soon arrived at the little cave to which we introduced our readers in the preceding chapter.

He then enforced silence on his companions, and after carefully examining some branches which seemed newly broken and some soil which appeared to be freshly disturbed, he laid himself flat on the

ground and wriggled into the cave after the manner of a snake.

After a few seconds his voice was heard inside, but its tone had nothing alarming in it; he was addressing the depths of the cavern, and, as they made no answer beyond an echo, he called to his companions that they might enter, which they did not do without considerable difficulty.

"Ah," exclaimed he who had played the part of a guide, breathing more freely, "*Tandem ad terminum eamus.*"

"And what on earth may that mean?" remarked one of his companions, in a strong Picard accent.

"It means, my dear Maldent, that we are approaching, or, rather, we have approached, the end of our journey."

"Bardon me, Monsieur Brogobe," said another, in an equally strong German accent, "but we did not understand, did you, Heinrich?"

"Nor me, neither," answered Heinrich.

"And why, in Heaven's name, do you want to understand?" rejoined Procope—for doubtless the reader has understood that it was that eminent lawyer that Franz Scharfenstein addressed as Brogobe. "Is it not enough if I and Maldent understand?"

"Ya," answered the two Germans, philosophically; "dat is all ve want."

"Then," said Procope, "let us sit down and discuss our plans while we are having lunch."

"Ya, ya," said the Scharfensteins, who perfectly understood this part of the business.

The two giants then drew some wine and a fair proportion of eatables from their wallets, and a repast commenced which did credit to the appetites of our friends.

Maldent was the first to speak. "You said, mon cher, that you would tell us your plans while we were at lunch. My lunch is two thirds over, and you have not spoken a word."

"Ve be listening," said Frantz, with his mouth full.

"Well?"

"Well, then here it is. *Ecce res judicanda*, as they say in court."

"Be quiet, Scharfenstein," said Maldent.

"Me have not said von vord," said Frantz.

"Nor me, neither," said Heinrich.

"I thought I heard something."

"So did I," said Procope.

"I suppose it is a fox whose cover we have disturbed. Go on, Procope."

"Well, then, about a quarter of a league from here there is a capital little farm—"

"You promised us a chateau," cried Maldent.

"Confound it! how particular you are! It is a first-rate farm-house."

"I don't care vedder it's a varm or a jadeau, if it's got de money in it," observed Frantz.

"Bravo! that is what I call sense; but this fellow Maldent is only fit for a special pleader."

"Go on, and don't be all night, Procope."

"Well, then, as I said before, about a quarter of

a league from here there is a charming little country-house—call it a farm, or chateau, as you like—which is only inhabited by the mistress, and one male and one female servant. It is true that the farmer and his people live close by.”

“How many of dem is dere?” inquired Heinrich.

“About ten.”

“Frantz and me vill take six; eh, Frantz?”

“Ya,” was the laconic retort.

“At nightfall we will leave the cave as silently as we entered it, follow an obscure path that I have found out to the bottom of their wall; once there, Heinrich shall mount on Frantz’s shoulders, or *vice versâ*, get over the wall, and open the door for us. The door once open, you understand, Maldent—you see, don’t you, Scharfenstein?—the door open, we will rush in.”

“Not without us, I hope,” broke in a sturdy voice, some few paces behind the group, and with sufficient suddenness to make even the two giants start.

“Treason!” cried Procope, starting to his feet, and bounding back.

“Treason!” cried Maldent, trying in vain to see into the dark recesses of the cave.

“Dreason!” shouted the two Scharfensteins in a breath, drawing their swords and stepping forward.

“Ah, battle, battle! you want to fight,” said the same voice; “here, Lactance, Fracasso, Malemort!”

A triple shout from the darkness showed that the appeal was answered.

“Stop a minute, Pilletrousse,” cried Procope, who

had recognized his fourth enemy; "stop in the devil's name! Are we Turks or gypsies, to cut one another's throats in a dark hole in this fashion, without trying to come to an understanding?"

"Let us have a light here; let us know whom we are dealing with, and then, if we can not come to an agreement, we can fight afterward."

"Fight first, and agree to what you like afterward," growled a sepulchral voice in the darkness.

"Silence, Malemort!" said Pilletrousse; "I think Procope is right. Come, Lactance, Fracasso, what do you say?"

"I say," answered Lactance, "that we should accept any proposition that may save the life of a man and a brother."

"It would have been romantic to fight in the obscurity, with this grotto of nature for the tomb of the victims," murmured Fracasso, "but poesy must yield to more material interests. I agree with Pilletrousse."

"But I *will* fight!" shrieked Malemort.

"Bind up your arm, and hold your tongue," said Pilletrousse. "Procope's a lawyer, and he will tell you that three always outvote one."

Malemort resigned himself to the hard fate of escaping a fresh wound with a sigh of regret.

During this time Lactance had managed to light a pine torch which they had brought with them, and which threw a smoky glare over the party.

At the back of the tavern were grouped Pilletrousse, Malemort, Lactance, and Fracasso, and near-

er the mouth stood the two Scharfensteins, Maldent, and Procope.

Pilletrousse remained in advance of his party, and behind him stood Malemort clinching his fists with fury, and behind came Lactance and Fracasso, who were striving in vain to pacify their companion.

The Scharfensteins formed the advance guard of the opposition party, and Procope brought up the rear.

Our adventurers were no strangers; they had seen one another on the field of battle fighting against the common enemy, and they respected one another accordingly. Each one felt that his adversaries were not to be trifled with, but on none did this seem to make so profound an impression as on Procope; he therefore advanced to the front, taking good care, however, to keep sheltered between the Scharfensteins.

"Gentlemen," said he, "we have procured a light by mutual desire, and now we can appreciate our chances. We are four to four; but inasmuch as my friends on my right and left are on our side; we may well say that we are eight to four."

The immediate consequence of this decidedly imprudent gasconade was a shout of defiance from his four adversaries, and a universal drawing of swords. Procope saw that he was on the wrong tack, and continued:

"But, gentlemen, I do not mean to say that eight to four would by any means insure us the victory, when those four were called Pilletrousse, Malemort, Lactance, and Fracasso."

This oil on the troubled waters seemed to calm all except Malemort.

"Come to the point," said Pilletrousse.

"Agreed," said Procope; "therefore, putting aside the question of chances of victory or defeat, let us look at the affair in a simple and honorable manner. Who conceived the idea last evening of sacking the little chateau called The Park to-night? I did. Who started this morning from Doulens to put our project into execution? These gentlemen and I. Who came to this cave to make arrangements for the night? Again, these gentlemen and I. Answer this, Pilletrousse, and say if the enterprise does not fairly belong to those who had the first idea, and were the first to execute it? *Dixi.*"

Pilletrousse burst out laughing, and Malemort roared out, "Fight, fight, fight!" in a tone of the most ardent longing.

"What do you find to laugh at, Pilletrousse?" said Procope, solemnly.

"I was laughing," answered Pilletrousse, "at the profound confidence with which you state your rights, and at the conclusions which you draw from your statement of the case, for it happens that those conclusions entirely destroy your claim. I perfectly agree with you that the enterprise belongs to those who first conceived the idea of it, and were the first to put it into execution."

"There!" said Procope, turning to his companions with a triumphant air.

"Yes, but I have to add that you say you got

the idea of sacking The Park yesterday. Very likely; but I thought of it the day before yesterday. You left Douzens this morning to put it into execution; but we left Montreuil-sur-Mer last night with the same object. You arrived here an hour ago; we have been here four hours. You intend attacking the farm to-night, but we expect to take it this evening. We therefore claim the priority, both of idea and execution, and consequently the right to pursue our object without let or hindrance from you;" and, copying Procope's classical termination, "Dixi," said Pilletrousse, with as much solemnity and assurance as the lawyer himself.

"But," answered Procope, somewhat troubled by this reasoning, "what guarantee have we for the truth of all this?"

"My word as a gentleman," answered Pilletrousse.

"I should like something else better."

"My word as a highwayman, then, if that will suit you."

"Hum!" said Procope, imprudently.

Their blood was up, and the doubt cast upon Pilletrousse's word brought it to a point.

"Well, then, fight!" cried his three companions, in a breath.

"Yes, fight, fight, fight!" screamed Malemort.

"Fight, then, if you will," said Procope.

"Well, fight it out; here goes," cried Maldent, drawing his sword.

"Ya, Bile!" roared the Scharfensteins, whose pronunciation somewhat altered the sense of their war-cry.

And as they were all agreed, each man drew his sword and dagger, and, fixing upon his adversary, prepared with flashing eyes and clinched teeth for the combat.

Suddenly the briers which closed the recess at the mouth of the cave separated, and an elegantly attired young fop, with a black mustache, bounded into the midst of the adversaries with outstretched arms, crying:

“Put up your arms, comrades; I’ll arrange it to every one’s satisfaction.”

All eyes turned to the unexpected mediator, and all voices cried:

“Yvonnet!”

“But where on earth do you start from?” cried Pilletrousse and Procope, in a breath.

“I will tell you directly,” said Yvonnet; “but sheathe your swords and daggers first; they set my teeth on edge.”

All the adventurers, except Malemort, obeyed.

“Come, my friend, what is this about?” said Yvonnet, addressing himself personally to him.

“Oh,” groaned Malemort, “they never will let a poor fellow fight in peace and quietness!”

And he sheathed his sword with a gesture of bitter disappointment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARTICLES OF PARTNERSHIP.

YVONNET cast his eyes round him, and seeing that if the excitement had not calmed down, the swords and daggers had at least returned to their sheaths, he turned to Procope and Pilletrousse, who, it will be remembered, had both addressed the same question to him.

"Where do I come from?" said he. "I come out of that bramble bush, where I was hidden when the first of you came in, and from whence I saw no reason to issue on the arrival of the second detachment."

"And what on earth were you doing here at that time of night, for we got here before day-break?" exclaimed Pilletrousse.

"And so you thought of paying a visit to the little chateau of The Park?" said Yvonnet, without taking any notice of Pilletrousse's question.

"We did and do."

"And you, too, Procope?"

"Certainly," replied the lawyer.

"And you were going to fight over the priority of your conceptions?"

"Most assuredly."

"For shame!" said Yvonnet; "are you not all comrades and Frenchmen, or at least bearing arms for France?"

"But we could not help it, since these gentlemen would not give up their intentions," said Procope.

"It was the only thing we could do when these gentlemen refused us our rights," said Pilletrousse.

"You could not help it—it was the only thing you could do?" said Yvonnet, imitating the voices of the two speakers. "You were absolutely forced to cut one another's throats in the dark; you could not avoid murdering one another. Men were made to help one another, and not to trip one another up: what four of you could only have accomplished with great danger, eight will perform almost without risk; instead of fighting, let us combine, and keep our hatred and our words for our enemies. And now," added Yvonnet, "I had this idea before any of you."

"What!" exclaimed Pilletrousse, "you also had the idea of getting into the chateau?"

"I not only had it, but I have put it into execution."

"Nonsense!" cried they, all starting.

"Yes," answered Yvonnet, grandiloquently. "I had intelligences within the fortress; there is a charming little waiting-maid called Gertrude."

Lactance sighed.

"You say you have been in the chateau?"

"I came from there last night. You know how I dislike being out alone in the dark; so, rather than go six leagues to Abbeville, or three leagues to Dou-lens, I preferred coming half a league to this cave, where I remember first to have met my divinity. I went to sleep, intending to propose the affair to the

first of you I met to-day; then in came Pilletrousse with his band, then Procope with his, and you fell to quarreling like so many dogs over a bone. Now I say to you—will you combine instead of fighting? Will you enter by stratagem instead of force? Would you prefer having the doors opened to breaking them in? instead of taking your chance of finding the money and the plate, would you like to have it shown to you? if so, give me your hands, for I am your man; and in spite of the great service I am going to do you, I will only take an equal share of the profits with the rest. Now, if any one has anything better to propose, let him speak.”

This speech was received with the most rapturous applause by all except Malemort, who grumbled from his corner. “And there will not be a single bit of fighting in the whole cursed business—disgusting!”

“Come, then,” said Yvonnet, who had long desired some such association, “let us lose no more time in preparing our deed of partnership; here are nine of us who fear neither man nor the devil, and luckily among us there is a lawyer, who doubtless has pen, ink, and paper about him.”

“By Jove, so I have! what luck! as Yvonnet says.”

“Well, then, make haste; let us prepare our articles of partnership. One of us must be placed outside to see that we are not disturbed.”

“I’ll go,” cried Malemort, “I’ll mount guard; and let any Spaniards, Germans, or Englishmen I find prowling about look to themselves.”

“No, that is just what we do not want, my friend,

inasmuch as we happen to be just half-way between the camps of his majesty and Charles the Fifth, and not being over far from a man who has the sight and hearing of Philibert of Savoy; it is better not to kill anybody we can help, because, however sure one may be of one's blows, one does not always kill one's adversary on the instant, and then people have a stupid trick of shouting, and those shouts would disturb his highness the Duke of Savoy, whose company we do not desire. No, my dear Malemort, you stop where you are, and let one of the Scharfensteins mount guard; they are Germans, and, if needs be, can pass themselves off as lansquenets of the Duc d'Aremberg, or a follower of the Count of Waldeck."

"De Gount Valdeck vill do de best," said Frantz Scharfenstein.

"The colossus is stuffed with sense," said Yvonnnet; "yes, my friend, 'de Gount Valdbeck vill do de best,' because the Count of Waldeck is a marauder—that is what you mean."

"Ya, me mean dat."

"Very good," said Yvonnnet, "then go to your post."

Frantz turned his vast person round, and directed his steps toward the mouth of the cave with his accustomed gravity.

Yvonnnet then took the torch from Maldent, and giving it to Heinrich, "There, Scharfenstein," said he, "we give you the post of honor; you will light Procope."

And thus Heinrich was transformed into a living candlestick six feet four high.

Procope sat down and drew forth pen, ink, and paper, and commenced the work at which he was engaged when we first introduced him to the reader.

We have pointed out that the task at which Procope was hard at work from eleven to three o'clock on the all-important day of the 5th of May, 1555, was no easy matter to accomplish, for there were as many amendments and divisions as on a bill passing through an English Parliament.

At the moment when Yvonnet's watch, (for rare as those articles then were, Yvonnet had a watch) showed a quarter past three, Procope laid down his pen with a sigh of relief, and looking at the paper with an inexpressible pride and satisfaction, said, "That's done—and not so badly done, either."

At this announcement all the adventurers, except Frantz, approached the table, but that worthy elephant left his uncle in charge of his interests, and remained outside with the full determination to defend his companions against intrusion, and himself against being captured by any one, but particularly by Philibert the Just.

"Gentlemen," said Procope, looking with evident satisfaction at the circle formed round him, "is every one ready to hear the eighteen clauses of our deed of partnership or incorporation? for in fact we are founding a company."

An affirmative having been given, Procope began:

"We, the undersigned:

“Jean Chrysostome Procope, etc., Honore Joseph Maldent, Victor Felix Yvonnnet, Cyrille Nepomucene Lactance, Cæsar-Hannibal Malemort, Martin Pilletrousse, Vittorio Albani Fracasso, and Heinrich and Frantz Scharfenstein—all officers in the army of his majesty King Henry the Second.”

A murmur of applause ran through the assembly.

“Have agreed as follows—”

The reading of the agreement was here interrupted by a stifled cry outside the cave, which instantly turned the interest of the adventurers into a new channel.

Suddenly the daylight was intercepted by a shapeless mass, which filled up the mouth of the cave, and then steadily advanced into the center of the circle, which opened to receive it, and disclosed to the astonished eyes of the associates, Frantz Scharfenstein with a young woman in his arms, over whose mouth he had got his huge paw to serve for a gag.

Every one waited for an explanation, and at last:

“Comrades,” said the giant, “dis is von cursed voman dat vos trying to get into de cave. Vot shall ve do vit she?”

The woman, or rather girl, for she was young and pretty, seemed, from her costume, to belong to the most honorable family of cooks, and she cast her eyes round her in a scared kind of manner, which showed that she found her hosts and her reception somewhat alarming; but before she had gone right round the circle she suddenly arrested her gaze, with

an appearance of intense relief, on the handsome face of the youngest of the adventurers.

"Oh, Yvonnet!" cried she, "protect me, defend me, for the love of Heaven!"

And she threw herself trembling into his arms.

"Halloa!" cried he; "mon Dieu, it is Gertrude!"

And holding her in his arms to reassure her:

"Gentlemen," said he, "we shall have the latest news from The Park now, for my fair friend comes from there."

Now, as news from The Park was at that moment of paramount importance to our adventurers, they abandoned the reading of the incomplete agreement, and grouped themselves round the two young people, waiting impatiently till Mlle. Gertrude's emotion was sufficiently calmed down to allow her to speak.

CHAPTER V.

COUNT WALDECK.

It was some minutes before Yvonnet could pacify Mlle. Gertrude sufficiently to enable her to relate the cause of her sudden appearance, and even then the narrative was so broken and so much interrupted by questions on the part of one or other of the adventurers, that, with the reader's permission, we will substitute our own language for that of the young lady, and relate, as truthfully as we can, the tragic events which had driven her from The Park.

That morning, just as Mlle. Gertrude had at length reluctantly decided that it really was time to get up, Phillipin, a young fellow of some eighteen years of age, whose father occupied the farm, came rushing in like a scared ox, and, bursting into the room of the lady of the house, announced to her that a troop of some forty to fifty horsemen, who appeared, from their yellow and black shoulder belts, to belong to the army of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, were approaching the chateau, and had taken prisoner his father, who was working in the fields.

Phillipin, who had witnessed this performance, and who had fancied from their gestures that they were talking of The Park, had thrown himself on the ground, crawled along till he was out of sight, and then started up and set off for the chateau as fast as his legs would carry him, and thus gave his mistress time to form her resolution before the arrival of the soldiers.

The chatelaine rose, and easily assured herself of the truth of Phillipin's report. The band was just coming into sight, and appeared to be under the command of three chiefs, one of whom held the end of the cord with which the unfortunate farmer's hands were tied behind his back, so that there might be no chance of escape.

This, certainly, was not a reassuring sight; but as the three chiefs had coronets surmounting their helmets, and coats of arms engraved upon their breastplates, and, moreover, as the Duke Emmanuel Philibert had issued the most stringent edicts against all

pillage and marauding; and last, but not least, because she had no means of flight, the chatelaine resolved to receive the new-comers to the best of her ability, and, consequently, to do them the more honor, she left her room and stood ready on the doorstep to welcome them.

As to Mlle. Gertrude, her alarm was so great, that, instead of following her mistress, she clung to Phillipin, and besought him, in the most piteous tones, to find her some place where she might hide till the soldiers had taken their departure.

Phillipin thereupon placed her in a dark corner of one of the barns, remarking that it was a place which it was most improbable that the soldiers would trouble themselves about, as there was nothing but water to drink. He then locked the door and put the key in his pocket—which seemed to give her some consolation at being left alone.

Gertrude held her breath to listen more eagerly, and heard a great clanking of arms and neighing of steeds, and the loud voices of the troopers, but finally—as Phillipin had foreseen—all these sounds appeared to concentrate themselves in the chateau.

The prisoner was dying with curiosity and bursting with impatience, and had not the door been locked, she would most certainly have run her head into the danger after all, just for the sake of seeing what was going on.

At last a cautious step was heard; a key grated in the lock, the door gently opened, and shut again instantly after having given entrance to Phillipin.

“Well, what are they doing?” exclaimed Gertrude, long before the door was shut.

“Well, mademoiselle,” answered the astonished rustic, “they seem to be gentlemen; but, bless us and save us! if ever I saw such gentlemen; if you only just heard them curse and swear, you would take them for outlandish pagan cannibals.”

“Oh, mon Dieu, how horrid!”

“Yes, but it’s true, mademoiselle; and when the almoner was going to say grace, they told him to hold his tongue or they’d hang him up to the rope of the tower bell, and let their almoner, who is a great whiskered cut-throat, with shoulders like a bull, say grace over him.”

“But then after all, they’re not gentlemen?”

“Oh, yes, they are, though; they are the highest German nobility, and they had the impudence to announce their names after behaving in this way—the brutes! The old one, who is called Count Waldeck, must be about fifty, and he commands four thousand troopers in the emperor’s army. The two young ones must be about twenty-five and twenty. The first is his legitimate son, and the other is a bastard, and it seems to me he likes the bastard best. The legitimate one is a right-out handsome fellow, with a pale face, and black hair and mustache, and I think we might make him hear reason; but the other is as red as a ferret, and has got eyes like a wild cat. Oh, Mademoiselle Gertrude, I do believe he’s the devil himself, and you should only see how he looks at my lady.”

And having wound up with this startling announcement, Phillipin proposed to go and learn more news.

"Oh, yes, do go," said Gertrude, "and mind you come back quick, and mind you lock the door, and mind you don't get hurt, and mind—oh, dear, oh, dear, what will become of me!" exclaimed she, as Phillipin vanished in the middle of this lucid exhortation.

Gertrude sat down meditating on what this horrid bastard could be like, and was becoming possessed by the strongest desire to see, when the messenger reappeared.

He certainly was not a herald of peace, and did not bring an olive branch, by any means; on the contrary, he brought the news that, by means of threats, and even of violence, Count Waldeck and his sons had forced the baronne to give up her jewels, her plate, and all the money there was in the chateau, and then, when she thought that that was a sufficient ransom to buy her liberty from the guests who had come and asked her hospitality, the poor woman had been seized, gagged, tied to her bed-post, and told that if she did not find another two hundred gold crowns within two hours the chateau would be set on fire and burned to the ground, with her in it.

Mlle. Gertrude lamented most piteously over the fate of her mistress; but, as she had not got two hundred gold crowns to lend her, she was obliged to solace herself by asking what that horrid bastard was doing.

“ Oh, mon Dieu ! he’s getting drunk, and his father is helping him ; the only one who is sober is the young Count Waldeck.”

Phillipin left again, and while he was away, Gertrude, with whom curiosity had gradually overcome every other feeling, had come to the determination to see what was going on somehow ; but when he returned for the third time his aspect was so changed that she recoiled in terror.

Phillipin was as pale as a corpse, his words were broken and incoherent, and his eyes wore the haggard expression of one who has just seen some awful and terrible scene.

Gertrude tried to question him, but in vain ; the sight of his horror-stricken countenance seemed to freeze her into stone, and her speech failed her when confronted with Phillipin’s dumb terror.

The young man, without explanation, but with the strength of fear and despair, seized her wrist and dragged her toward the garden gate, murmuring to himself :

“ Dead—stabbed—murdered ! ”

Then Gertrude cast her eyes round her ; they were close to the skirt of the forest ; once in the forest she knew her way to the grotto, and in the grotto she might perhaps find Yvonne.

She felt some compunction about abandoning Phillipin, who had fainted, but she saw some five or six horsemen approaching, who doubtless were some of Count Waldeck’s troopers. Fear got the better of all else ; there was not an instant to lose ; she turned

round, and, mad with terror, her hair flying, her dress torn to shreds by the brambles, she darted like a hunted hare across the open space which separated her from the woods; then at last she drew up and looked back.

The five cavaliers had arrived at the place where she had left Phillipin insensible; they stopped, raised him, but he could not move a step; at last one of them placed Phillipin before him on the saddle, and followed by his companions took the road to the camp.

Now, as these men appeared to have the best intentions, Gertrude concluded that nothing very awful would happen to her admirer in their hands.

Reassured as to her companion, she began to look to her own safety, and turned her steps in the direction of the cave, or, rather, in what she imagined to be the direction, for her flight had so confused her that she forgot the signs by which she was accustomed to recognize the path, and wandered about from one place to another for more than an hour. At the end of this time she accidentally found herself at her destination, and within arm's-length of Frantz Scharfenstein.

The rest may easily be imagined; the giant clapped one hand over her mouth, threw the other arm round her waist, and taking her up as if she had been a feather, entered the cave and deposited the astonished maiden in the midst of the circle of adventurers.

Then, as we have said, she related the circumstances which we have just laid before our readers,

and which were received with a general howl of execration directed against Count Waldeck for having pillaged in the morning The Park, which they had calculated on sacking that evening; and the result of this universal disgust was the unanimous carrying of a proposition to sally out and see what was going on.

But our adventurers' indignation by no means overcame their prudence. It was therefore decided that Yvonnet, who knew every turn in the forest, and was as active as a cat, and as wary as a fox, should go out first and see that the coast was clear.

In about ten minutes he came back.

The forest seemed perfectly deserted, and there were no signs of danger. Our adventurers thereupon set out for the margin of the wood, after making sure that their swords and daggers were safe in their sheaths.

CHAPTER VI.

PHILIBERT THE JUST.

As our adventurers advanced toward the point where the forest threw out the long jutting spur which separated the two plains described in a former chapter, the great trees gradually became scarcer, and finally ceased altogether, and the little troop entered a belt of thick brushwood where the thou-

sands of interlacing stems, bound together by the rich luxuriance of the wild creepers and the low, bright foliage, completely hid them as they glided cautiously and noiselessly through it.

In this manner our friends attained the outskirts of the wood, without any living soul having a suspicion of their presence. At this point they were stopped by the deep ditch, or rather fosse, which separated the forest from the road leading from The Park to the imperial camp.

The spot was well suited for a halt; a huge oak, like an advanced guard, stood a pace or two beyond the thicket, and spread its massive branches out into the open country, affording a shelter from whence the adventurers might overlook the whole plain without being seen themselves.

All eyes turned instinctively toward the mighty arms of the tree, and Yvonnet, who perfectly understood the meaning of this singular unanimity in the direction of his companions' glances, borrowed Fracasso's note-book, and with the assistance of Frantz he mounted the tree, and the next instant was comfortably perched on one of the upper branches, where he seemed as much at home as a sailor-boy on the mizzen-top.

Having established himself in this exalted situation, he commenced turning his eyes from north to south, as though his attention were divided between two equally interesting spectacles.

At last, when the impatience of his companions, and of Gertrude in particular, was getting beyond

all possibility of restraint, Yvonnet tore a leaf from the note-book, and, after writing what appeared to his expectant friends to be an endless amount upon it, he let it fall.

Procope unfolded the novel billet-doux, and read :

“The Park is on fire.

“Count Waldeck, with his whole troop, is returning along the road toward the camp.

“They are about two hundred paces from where we are.

“Looking the other way, there is a small party coming from the camp toward The Park.

“It is composed of seven men—a knight, a squire, a page, and four soldiers.

“As well as I can make out, the knight is Emmanuel Philibert.

“They are about as far on our left as the others are on our right.

“They are coming on at equal speed, and they must meet exactly opposite us.

“If Phillipin has informed the duke what has taken place at the chateau, we shall have some fun.

“Look out, boys; it’s the duke himself, and no mistake.”

Yvonnet was right. Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, and generalissimo of the emperor’s troops in the Low Countries, was riding up with his squire on one hand, and his favorite page on the other, and followed by four horsemen, just as though he had been making his ordinary daily patrol.

He might be the easier recognized, as, instead of

wearing his helmet, he carried it slung to the pommel of his saddle, as was his ordinary habit, as well in the heat of the midday sun as in the wildest winter snow, and, indeed, often in the very height of battle; from which singular insensibility to heat, cold, and blows his soldiers had given him the sobriquet of "Iron-Headed."

At the time we write of he had just attained his twenty-seventh year; and one might have looked far and wide without seeing a finer specimen of manly beauty. He was of middle height, but firmly knit, and as straight as an arrow; his close-cut hair exposed to view a broad and ample forehead, and his clearly marked eyebrows shaded dark-blue eyes of a piercing brilliancy, rare in eyes of that color; his nose was as straight and finely cut as that of a Greek statue, and his glossy mustache lost itself in a peaked beard, which formed the envy and the admiration of half the young men in the country. The one slight blemish on this exquisite contour was a slight shortness of neck, which is so constantly found in the descendants of those warlike races who have worn the casque for centuries.

When he spoke, his voice had a singular mixture of sweetness and determination, and he could give it the most terrible and menacing accent, without raising its ordinary low tone, or losing one iota of his perfect self-command.

The squire who rode on his right hand was a young man of the duke's own age, and precisely of the same height, but even more powerfully and strongly built;

his clear blue eyes spoke of energy and pride; his hair was almost flaxen, and his thick curly beard and mustache even lighter; his nostrils, which dilated with every movement, like those of the lion, his full red lip, and his sunburned skin, glowing with health, all betokened the very acme of physical power.

He was armed with one of those terrible two-handed swords, three of which Francis the First broke at Martignan, and which, from their length, could only be drawn over the shoulder, and a battle-ax with a blade on one side, a heavy iron mace-head on the other, while a strong triangular spike formed the end of the weapon, which was thus equally serviceable for cutting or thrusting, or for beating down an enemy.

On the left of the duke rode his page, a fair boy of scarce eighteen, whose black hair, which shone with a blue luster, was worn in the German fashion, as Holbein painted gentlemen and Raphael painted angels. His long velvety eyelashes shaded his soft and gentle eyes, whose tint was that exquisite medium between violet and hazel which is rarely met with except in Arabs and Sicilians.

The youth's small and exquisitely shaped hand held the rein of his palfrey, which he guided with singular grace and skill, and sat with firmness and ease, though, instead of a saddle, its only trapping was a splendid leopard skin, in which the eyes were inserted in enamel, and the teeth and claws were wrought in gold, and instead of the heavy bridle of the time he had only a thin silk cord.

His dress was chaste and elegant; for the black velvet tunic was open just far enough to show an undershirt of cherry-colored satin slashed with white, and was drawn in at the waist by a silk cord, to which hung an exquisitely chiseled poniard, whose handle was composed of a single agate. His foot, whose almost babyish smallness seemed better suited to some delicate girl, was clothed in a boot of claret-colored leather, which reached up to the knee, and hid the fastening of his black velvet hose. His dress was completed by a cap formed of the same black velvet as the rest of his outer dress, and the long cerise plume, which drooped from it, was fastened by a diamond clasp.

Emmanuel Philibert and his companions rode on, neither hastening nor slackening their pace; only on arriving near the turn of the road, the duke's face became sad, as if he were expecting the sight of desolation and destruction which would be presented to his eyes as soon as he rounded the turn; but on arriving at the extremity of the angle, the two troops suddenly found themselves face to face, exactly as Yvonnet had foreseen; but strange to say, it was the larger party that stopped and fell back, with a movement in which astonishment was evidently largely mixed with fear.

Emmanuel, on the contrary, continued riding up to the very spot where Count Waldeck and his sons awaited him, and not a tremble of the hand, not a quiver of the lip, was there to show that anything

unusual was taking place; he was as calm and quiet as ever.

When he was at ten paces distant he raised his hand, and the squire, the page, and the four soldiers stopped with a military precision.

The duke rode on alone.

When he was within arm's-length of the young Count Waldeck, who had placed himself in front of his father, the duke stopped.

The three gentlemen raised their hands to their helmets and gave the salute; but before lowering his, the bastard struck down his visor, so as to be ready for either fortune.

The duke answered their salute by an inclination of his bare head.

Then addressing himself to the young count, with that beautifully sweet voice which made every word harmonious:

“Viscount Waldeck,” said he, “you are a brave and loyal gentleman, such as I love to meet, and such as our august emperor Charles the Fifth loves well to reign over; and I have long sought for some employment for you. An occasion has arisen but a quarter of an hour since, of which I hastened to avail myself. I have just received the intelligence that a company of five hundred lances, which I have levied in his majesty’s name on the left bank of the Rhine, is complete, and I appoint you to the command.”

“Monseigneur!” stammered the young man, in a tone of astonishment, and reddening with pleasure.

"Here is your brevet, signed by me, and stamped with the seal of the empire," said the duke, drawing a parchment from his breast. "Set out at once, without an instant's delay; we are probably on the eve of resuming the campaign, and I shall have work for you and your men. Go, Viscount Waldeck, go, and show yourself worthy of the favor I have shown you; go, and may Heaven defend you!"

The favor was great indeed, and the young man obeyed the order for instant departure. He took an immediate leave of his father and brother, and then, turning toward the duke:

"Monseigneur," said he, "you are rightly called the Just; just both to good and evil, to virtue and to crime. You have had confidence in me, and you shall not be disappointed; adieu, monseigneur."

And putting his horse to a gallop, the viscount vanished round the angle of the wood.

Emmanuel Philibert watched him till he was lost to view, and then, turning to Count Waldeck with a stern and altered look:

"And now for you, Monsieur le Count," said he.

"Monseigneur," broke in the count, "let me first thank you for the honor you have conferred on my son."

"The favor which I have shown to your son needs no thanks, for he deserved it; and you heard what he said, 'I am just both to evil and to good, to virtue and to crime;' therefore, give me your sword, Count Waldeck."

The count bowed, and answered in a voice which

showed that he did not find it easy to disobey the command which was given him:

“I give up my sword! and why?”

“You know my edict against pillage and marauding, under pain of the lash and the gibbet for the soldiery, and of arrest and imprisonment for the officers. You have disobeyed this edict, by forcing yourself, in spite of the remonstrances of your eldest son, into the chateau of The Park, and stealing the gold and jewels of its owner. You are a marauder and a plunderer, Count Waldeck, and I demand your sword!”

Count Waldeck grew pale; but we have said that it was difficult for a stranger to know the pitch to which the duke’s anger had arrived, or the terrible justice which it threatened.

“My sword, monseigneur!” said he; “doubtless I must have committed some other offense: a gentleman does not give up his sword for a paltry affair like this.”

And the count attempted to laugh disdainfully, but it only resulted in being uneasy.

“Yes,” answered Emmanuel Philibert, “you have committed other offenses, about which I was silent, for the honor of the German noblesse; but if you wish me to speak, I will. Listen, then. When you had plundered the gold and jewels, you were not satisfied, but you bound the unlucky mistress of the house to the bed-post, saying to her, ‘If within two hours you do not find two hundred gold crowns for your ransom, I shall set fire to the house. You

said this, and as, at the end of the time the unlucky woman could not find the money, having given you every farthing she possessed, you actually carried your threat into execution, in spite of the entreaties of your son, the viscount, setting fire to the furthest angle first, to give your victim time to reflect before the flames reached her. You do not deny it; you can not, for I can see the flames of the blazing chateau from here. You are an incendiary! Give up your sword, Count Waldeck."

The count ground his teeth with rage, for he was beginning to understand the terrible resolution which lay beneath this calm and placid surface.

"Since your information is so correct, you are probably equally well instructed respecting the end of the story?" muttered he.

"You are right, sir; I do know all; but I was silent, for I wished to save you from the gibbet."

"Monseigneur!" exclaimed Waldeck, in a fierce and threatening tone.

"Silence, sir!" replied Emmanuel Philibert, "respect your accuser, and tremble before your judge. Since you wish it, I will finish the story. When the flames were beginning to envelope the chateau, your bastard son took the keys and entered the room where you had bound its unhappy mistress. The poor woman had not uttered a cry when she saw the flames sweeping round her, for they only brought death, but she shrieked for help when your bastard son threw his arms round her, for he came to bring dishonor. Viscount Waldeck heard her cries, and ran

to the rescue. He ordered his brother to release his victim; but he, instead of doing so, hurled her, bound as she was, upon the bed, and drew his sword. The viscount instantly unsheathed his own blade, determined to save the unlucky woman, even at the risk of his life. The two brothers fought desperately, for they had long hated each other. It was at this instant that you entered, Count Waldeck, and fancying that your sons were fighting for the possession of this woman, 'Stop,' you cried; 'the prettiest woman on earth is not worth one drop of blood from a soldier's veins; lower your arms, you two; I'll reconcile you.'

"At the sound of your voice the two brothers sheathed their swords, and you passed between them. They fixed their eyes on you, wondering what you were going to do. You approached the bed, where the lady of the house was lying bound, and suddenly before either of your sons could interfere, you drew your dagger and drove it up to the hilt in her breast. Do not think to deny this; your dagger is wet, and your hands are red with innocent blood; you are a murderer! Give me your sword, Count Waldeck."

"It is very easy to say, 'Give me your sword;' but I would have you to know, crowned prince—ay, and dethroned prince in the bargain, as you are—that a Waldeck would not give up his sword to you and your seven men if he were alone, much less will he when he has his son at his side and forty troopers at his heels."

"Then," said Philibert, slightly raising his voice,

"if you decline to give up your sword, I must take it."

And one bound of his horse brought him face to face with the count.

Waldeck, unable to draw his sword, commenced unbuttoning his holsters, but while he was still fumbling with them, Emmanuel Philibert, with a movement rapid as thought, and utterly unforeseen either by his friends or his enemies, drew a pistol from his own holster, placed the muzzle quietly against the count's forehead, and drew the trigger.

The powder blackened the face of the haughty freebooter as the ball tore through his brain. He gave one wild shriek, then bent back slowly to the crupper of his horse like a wrestler who is overmatched, lost first one stirrup, then the other, reeled over to the side, and his lifeless corpse fell to the earth with a dull, heavy sound like a lump of clay.

Philibert the Just had been true to his epithet.

During this scene the bastard of Waldeck had stood firm and motionless like an equestrian statue, but on hearing the report of the pistol, and seeing his father fall from his horse, a fierce, inarticulate shout of rage hissed through the bars of his closed visor; then, turning to the stupefied and terror-stricken troopers:

"Follow me," he cried; "this man is none of us! Death to the Savoyard! Vengeance for the count! *A mort! a mort!*"

But the troopers only answered by a dubious shake of the head.

“Confusion seize you!” shouted the young man, utterly beside himself with fury, “do you hear me? Have you not the courage to revenge the man who loved you like children, who fed you with gold, and gorged you with plunder? Do you not dare to revenge your leader and your friend? Well, look on then, cowards and scoundrels that you are, and see me revenge him!”

And, drawing his sword, he dug his spurs into his horse’s flanks, and darted toward the duke; but two of his own troopers sprung down and seized the bridle of his horse, while a third threw his arms round him.

The bastard struggled like a madman, and showered curses and imprecations on the heads of those who detained him, but to no purpose; the troopers held him as if in a vise.

The duke’s calm face wore a certain expression of pity, for he fully understood and appreciated the fury and despair of a son who sees his father shot before his face.

“What shall we do with this man, your highness?” said one of the troopers.

“Release him,” answered the duke; “he has threatened me, and, were I to allow him to be made a prisoner, it might be imagined that I was afraid of him.”

The troopers wrested the sword from the hands of the bastard, and let him go.

With a single bound he cleared the space which separated him from Emmanuel Philibert, who stood

calmly waiting for him, with the second pistol in his hand.

“Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, and Prince of Piedmont,” cried the bastard, stretching his clinched fist toward him, “I tell you that from this day I hate you with a fierce and deadly hatred, and that I will dog you to your dying day; and, by Heaven, I will revenge my father’s death! Look at my face, Emmanuel Philibert,” cried he, raising his visor, “look at it, and mark it well, for whenever you see it again, misfortune, misery, and death—yes, death to you, Emmanuel Philibert, shall follow in its wake, as sure as I invoke the curse of Heaven upon you now!”

Once more the young German struck his spurs into his horse’s side, and darted at full gallop down the road; but ere he was hidden by the advancing trees he turned and shook his mailed fist, as if to hurl back a parting malediction on his enemy, and long after he was lost to sight his savage shout of vengeance was heard mingling with the ringing strokes of his horse’s hoofs.

“Scoundrel!” cried Emmanuel’s squire, darting forward in pursuit.

The duke, however, stopped him, in a tone that admitted of no dispute.

“Not another step, Scianca-Ferro—I forbid it.”

Then turning to his page, who was as pale as death, and seemed ready to faint:

“What is it, Leone?” asked he, giving him his

hand. "Why, any one who saw you so pale and trembling would say you were a woman!"

"Oh, my dearly loved duke, tell me that you are not wounded, or I shall die!" murmured the page.

"My child," said Emmanuel, "am I not under the protection of Heaven?"

Then turning to the troopers:

"My friends," said he, pointing to the body of the count, "see that that man has Christian burial, and let this day teach you that my justice is no respecter of persons."

Then making a sign to Scianca-Ferro and Leone to follow him, he once more turned his horse's head toward the camp, and as he rode back his face bore no sign of the terrible scene in which he had just been an actor, except that the lines may perhaps have been a little more strongly marked than usual upon his calm and thoughtful forehead.

CHAPTER VII.

HISTORY AND ROMANCE.

WHILE the adventurers, after many disappointed glances at the smoking ruins of The Park, are regaining their cave and completing their deed of partnership, which has become useless for the present, but which they think certain to turn to their future profit; while the troopers, in accordance with the

Duke of Savoy's recommendation, are digging a grave for their late captain; and while Emmanuel Philibert himself is quietly riding home with Scianca-Ferro on one hand and Leone on the other, let us dive yet further into the fairy regions of the past, and draw from the romantic history of the times some ideas of the antecedents and position of one or two of the principal actors of our drama.

Emmanuel Philibert, third son of Charles the Third, surnamed the "Good," and of Beatrice of Portugal, was born at the Chateau of Chambery on the 8th of July, 1528. He was nephew to Charles the Fifth, through his mother, and cousin to Francis the First, through his aunt, Louisa of Savoy, in whose good graces the Constable de Bourbon was said to be firmly established.

So feeble and sickly was he in his youth, that his father destined him for the church, and sent him, at the age of three years, to kiss the feet of Pope Clement the Seventh, who had just crowned his uncle, Charles the Fifth, and who, at the request of that sovereign, promised the next vacant cardinal's hat to the young prince; thence came the epithet of *Cardinalia*, which he received in his infancy, and which annoyed him to intensity as he grew up.

Let us relate how this name came to be so distasteful to him.

One of the ladies of honor to the Duchess of Savoy, and her most intimate friend, had, only six months previously, also borne a son, who had come into the world as strong and vigorous as Philibert was sickly

and delicate. Then the duchess said to her friend: "My dear Lucrezia, I hand over my dear son to your care; take him to your breast, and afford him the nourishment which I may never give him; take him and save him, dear, and I shall owe you more than he will, for he will only owe his own life, while you will give me the life of my child."

Lucrezia adopted the child of her sovereign, and treated him as her own; but yet, her little Rinaldo grew and strengthened every day, while the royal infant seemed to waste and pine.

One would have said that Rinaldo either honored the rank or pitied the weakness of his foster-brother, so entirely did the sturdy, vigorous baby yield to its companion.

The children grew up together on Lucrezia's knee; but at three years old Rinaldo seemed five, while Emmanuel Philibert at the same age could scarcely walk, and could only lift his head from its drooping position with a painful exertion.

It was at this time that he was sent on his journey to Rome, and that Clement the Seventh promised him a cardinal's hat.

It seemed as if this promise brought him blessings, and as if the name of Cardinalia placed him under the protection of Heaven; for from this time his health improved, his limbs began to fill out, and his whole system to strengthen and to flourish.

But even his present progress was slow and contemptible when compared with that of Rinaldo. However stout were his toys, they were instantly

broken by him; and even when a set of steel playthings were made for him, they were broken nearly as quickly. Thus it came that Charles the Good, who loved to watch the children at play, nick-named Emmanuel's companion Scianca-Ferro, which, in the Piedmontese patois, means the Iron-Breaker, and the name stuck to him ever after.

It was, however, remarkable that Scianca-Ferro never seemed to make use of his great strength, except for the purpose of protecting Emmanuel, whom he adored, instead of being jealous of him, as most children would have been.

The young Emmanuel coveted his companion's strength and vigor most enormously, and would willingly have exchanged his own epithet of Cardinalia for that of Scianca-Ferro; and really the prince seemed to catch some of the abundant health and power with which his foster-brother was overflowing. In this instance physical force was certainly infectious. Scianca-Ferro tried his strength against him; he ran, he wrestled, he swam with him; and occasionally—for fear of disheartening him by always beating him—would let himself be thrown in the struggle or passed in the race.

All their pastimes were enjoyed together, and Scianca-Ferro was the best in everything; but those who watched the two boys saw that Emmanuel was strengthening every day, and would finally press hard upon him.

One day, when the court of Charles the Third was held at Verceil, on account of the disturbances

which had broken out at Milan, the two young men had sallied out with their riding-master, and had followed the left bank of the Sesia as far as Novare, and then pushed on to Tessin, which was a somewhat adventurous thing to do in the unsettled state of the country. Emmanuel was slightly in advance, when suddenly a bull, which was grazing in a neighboring field, charged straight at the prince bellowing furiously. The spirited horse on which the young man was mounted was so frightened by the sudden apparition that he became utterly ungovernable, and darted away across the plain with headlong fury, clearing hedges, ditches, and water-courses in its frantic speed.

There was little to fear, for Emmanuel was a first-rate rider; still, this was not sufficient for Scianca-Ferro, who put his own horse to its utmost speed, and gave chase, following the same route, and leaping all obstacles, in the same manner as his companion.

The riding-master, however, took the road, which, after winding about to all points of the compass, would probably lead him to the same point that the young men would arrive at in a somewhat more direct manner.

After a quarter of an hour's frantic pursuit, Scianca-Ferro had entirely lost sight of Emmanuel, and fearing lest some accident might have happened to him, he began to shout. For some time he got no answer, but at last he heard Emmanuel's voice in the direction of Oleggio, and turning his horse toward

the sound, he finally found his friend by the bank of the stream.

At his feet was lying the lifeless corpse of a woman, who, appeared to have perished from hunger, misery and fatigue, and in his arms was a little boy, of some four or five years of age, who appeared to be dying also.

The village was only a mile off, and therefore Scianca-Ferro set out for it at full gallop. Emmanuel would have gone himself, but the child, who seemed to see a savior in him, clung to him, and cried most piteously when he attempted to depart.

The little fellow led him to the corpse of the dead woman, and looking up in his face with his appealing, dying eyes, kept beseeching him in a plaintive, earnest voice:

“Wake mamma—do wake mamma!”

Poor Emmanuel could do nothing; almost a child himself, it was the first time he had seen death—he had nothing but tears to give, and he gave these.

Scianca-Ferro returned at last, bearing bread and wine; they knelt down beside the corpse and poured wine into the open mouth, but the spirit had fled, and they wasted their efforts upon lifeless clay.

They now turned to the son; and he, though still crying because his mother would not wake, ate and drank in a way that sufficiently showed hunger and thirst, and seemed somewhat revived.

At this moment the peasants from the village came up, bringing with them the riding-master, who had

been frightened out of his life at the loss of his pupils.

The country people now knew that it was the Prince of Savoy that they had to deal with; and, as Charles the Third was adored by his subjects, they offered to do everything for the unlucky orphan which Emmanuel might be pleased to command.

Emmanuel chose a woman who seemed to him kind and sympathizing, and giving her all the money which he and Scianca-Ferro had about them, begged her to attend to the burial of the mother and the wants of the child.

As it was getting late, the riding-master now insisted on his charges returning to Verceil. The little orphan cried, and could hardly be induced to leave Emmanuel, whose name he knew, but whose title he did not understand; the latter, however, promised to return on the following day, which somewhat calmed his childish grief.

Although the riding-master pressed forward on their road home, they did not reach the chateau till late in the evening, and Emmanuel, in that sweet, low voice which was now rendered even sweeter by the melancholy story which he had to relate, immediately told the events of the day, and the impression it had made upon him, to the duchess, who praised her son fondly, and promised that the day after the funeral she would herself go and visit the child.

Agreeably to this resolution, the duchess and the two young men set out for the village of Oleggio on

the second day following the adventure. On arriving near the place, Emmanuel could no longer contain his impatience, and striking his spurs into his horse's side, he set off at full speed.

Great was the joy of the poor little orphan on seeing his friend return.

He was presented by Emmanuel to the duchess, who instantly asked a question which he had forgotten, which was the child's name.

The boy answered that he was called Leone, and that his mother's name was Leona; he said, however, that he did not remember anything more, and to all the questions that he was asked, only answered by repeating over and over again:

"I don't know; I don't know."

And yet, strangely enough, it seemed to every one as if the ignorance was only pretended, and as if the child really knew some secret which nothing could induce him to divulge; doubtless the mother must have given some dying command to the boy, for nothing less would have sufficed to make such an impression on the mind of a child only four years old.

The duchess scrutinized the boy with true feminine curiosity, and noticed that, although his clothes were coarse and common, yet his white and delicate hands showed the care of an elegant and refined mother, and his language was elegant and even aristocratic, and, young as he was, he seemed to speak French and Italian with equal ease.

The duchess had the mother's clothes brought to her; but they were the clothes of a peasant.

The villagers, however, who had shrouded her, said that they had never seen a whiter skin or more beautiful and delicate feet and hands.

There was one article of her dress also which infallibly betrayed the class of society to which the owner had belonged; with her peasant's dress, her cotton shirt, her serge jacket, and her great wooden shoes, she wore silk stockings.

Doubtless she had fled from somewhere in disguise, but in her haste had forgotten to change the stockings, which had betrayed her after her death.

The duchess once more turned her inquiries to the child, but was met by the constant "I don't know;" and so she had no choice but to commit him once more to the charge of the peasants, and recommend them to try and discover round the neighborhood who the mother had been.

Nothing would satisfy little Leone but following Emmanuel, and the latter was strongly inclined to take the boy home with him, but was satisfied at last by the duchess promising a second visit.

Unluckily, about this time events took place which compelled her to break her word.

For the third time Francis the First proclaimed war against Charles the Fifth, on the score of the much-disputed duchy of Milan, which he claimed through Valentine Visconti, the wife of Louis d'Orleans, who was brother to Charles the Sixth.

In the first war Francis had been victorious at Martignan.

In the second he had been routed at Pavia.

One might have thought that after the treaty of Madrid, after the prison of Toledo, and lastly, after his solemnly plighted word, Francis would have renounced all idea of this unlucky duchy, the much-envied possession of which would have made the King of France a subject of the emperor; but, far from this being the case, Francis was only watching for the first decently plausible excuse to begin again.

The occasion which chance now threw in his way was this:

Maria Francesco Sforza, son of Ludovic the Moor, as he is popularly called, though in reality his appellation of "il Moro" arose not from any peculiarity of complexion, but from the mulberry-tree which formed his coat of arms, reigned as a vassal of the emperor, who had sold him his duchy for four hundred thousand ducats, payable during the first year of his reign, and five hundred thousand payable during the ten following years, the chateaus of Milan, Como, and Pavia remaining as security in the hands of the emperor.

In 1534, Francis the First sent a gentleman whose fortune he had made as ambassador to the court of the Duke of Sforza.

This gentleman was called Francesco Maraviglia.

After becoming rich and powerful at the court of France, it was with joy and pride that Maraviglia returned to his native city surrounded by all the pomp of an embassy.

His wife and daughter—the latter a little child only three years old—accompanied him, but his son

Odoardo, a boy of about twelve years, remained in Paris, where he occupied a post among the pages of Francis the First.

We have no means now of ascertaining why this ambassador was abnoxious to Charles the Fifth, or why he ordered Sforza to get rid of him on the first plausible occasion, but that he did so there can be but little doubt; and Sforza was by no means slow in executing the command, for Maraviglia's servants having got into some quarrel with some country people, and having unluckily killed two of them in the scuffle, Sforza instantly arrested their master, and sent him prisoner to Milan, which was still in the hands of the emperor.

It is uncertain what became of Maraviglia; some say he was poisoned, others that he unluckily happened to tumble down an oubliette, of which his jailers had not thought it necessary to warn him. The most likely version of the story is, that he was executed, or rather murdered, in prison. One thing is however certain, and that is, that somehow or other, Maraviglia vanished from the face of the earth, and that his wife and daughter vanished at the same time, and that neither of them was ever heard of afterward.

Francis the First was not the man to let such an opportunity slip through his fingers. His country had been insulted in the person of his ambassador, and the laws of God and man had been broken and violated by this foul and secret crime, and he determined upon a third Italian expedition.

The moment was favorable, for Charles the Fifth was in Africa, warring against Barbarossa; but in order to accomplish the invasion, it would be necessary to pass through Savoy. It therefore became a matter of vital importance to know whether Charles the Good would side with his nephew or his brother-in-law.

All the probabilities seemed in favor of Savoy becoming the ally of the Empire and the enemy of France.

Francis the First sent Guillaume Foyet to Turin, with instructions to demand from Charles the Third a passage for the French army across Savoy and Piedmont, and that Montmeillan, Veillane, Chivas, and Verceil should be given up to him as pledges of good faith.

In exchange for this, Francis offered to give Charles estates in France, and to give the hand of his daughter Marguerite to Philibert's eldest brother, Louis.

Charles the Third deputed Purpuret to negotiate with Foyet, and instructed him to grant the passage for the troops, but to meet the second demand with delay, or, if necessary, with absolute refusal.

The discussion between the two politicians was of the very warmest description, and at last Foyet, who was utterly out-reasoned by his opponent, exclaimed: "Well, then, it shall be done because the king chooses!"

"I beg your pardon," answered Purpuret, "but I never saw that law in the Piedmontese code."

The conferences hereupon came to an abrupt termination, and consequently, one fine day in February, 1535, when Charles was residing at Verceil, a herald was ushered in, and declared war on the part of King Francis the First.

Charles listened calmly to the terrible message, and when it was over—

“My friend,” said he, quietly, “I have always been a friend to the King of France, and I should have thought that the titles of ally, uncle, and neighbor would have insured a little more consideration at his hands. I have done my best to preserve amicable relations with his majesty, and I am well aware that I am by no means in a condition to cope with him; but yet as there does not seem to be any possibility of inducing him to listen to reason, and as he seems determined to possess himself of my kingdom, you may tell him that whenever he determines to pay me a visit, he will find me and my friends ready to receive him on the frontiers. My nephew is well acquainted with my motto, ‘He whom God protects lacks for nothing.’”

And he sent back the herald with a handsome embroidered suit and a gauntlet full of gold crowns.

After this, there was nothing for it but to prepare for war with all speed; and the first step taken by Charles the Good was to place his wife and child in security at Nice. It was therefore announced that they would leave Verceil immediately.

Emmanuel Philibert now thought it time to proffer a request which he had been meditating on, namely:

to be allowed to take Leone from the cottage where he was, and make a companion of him for himself and Scianca-Ferro.

The duchess was, as we have said, a kind and a judicious woman. She had been struck by the delicacy and refinement of the child, and it seemed to her that at a time when misfortunes appeared to be gathering round their devoted heads, and when the future looked lowering and black, Providence had sent them this young child, which might grow up to be a friend and support; and she gave her willing sanction to Leone's introduction into the family.

Thus Leone became the companion of the Prince of Piedmont.

Emmanuel lost no time in announcing the good tidings to his new friend, and the day-break found him galloping along the road to Oleggio.

He found his protégé in tears; the poor child had heard that his rich and powerful protectors were in their turn visited by misfortune and distress; he had heard that they were about to leave for Nice, and he wept as if he had once more lost his mother.

When Emmanuel told him that he was to come and live with him, his joy was beyond all bounds. The sunshine soon succeeds the showers in the April of our life.

Two hours later, Scianca-Ferro arrived with the duchess's own palfrey for Leone, and after handsomely rewarding the peasants, they set him on the horse and rode back, leading it by the bridle.

Scianca-Ferro, instead of being jealous of this new

friend, was as joyous as a bird. They soon arrived at Verceil, whence they set out for Nice on the following day.

CHAPTER VIII.

SQUIRE AND PAGE.

Do not imagine, reader, that we are going to describe the desperate wars by which the rival monarchs desolated Italy during the commencement of the sixteenth century. Our task is much more humble, but at the same time more picturesque, and we shall but glance at the great events of the period.

Francis the First hurried through Savoy and Piedmont, and overspread Italy with his troops.

For three long years the rival cannon of France and of the Empire had thundered throughout Provence and Milan.

And yet, while this reckless waste of life and treasure was going on around them, the three children grew and strengthened under the clear blue sky of Nice, with its cloudless days and its brilliant nights.

Leone had become an indispensable member of the family; he joined in all the boys' games and exercises, except those martial exercises, which were too rough for his delicate hands and arms. He was three years younger than his companions, but at first sight there seemed to be ten years' difference between them; for Emmanuel had now taken to growing in

a way that seemed as if he had determined to overtake Scianca-Ferro.

Emmanuel's two companions seemed to fall into their positions naturally; Scianca-Ferro became his squire; Leone was content with the more humble office of page.

While things were going on in this quiet way, the news came that Emmanuel's elder brother had died suddenly at Madrid.

This was a great trial for the duke and duchess, but they were consoled—if parents can be consoled—for the death of a child. Louis had been away from home for many years, and Emmanuel, who was the darling of his father and mother, flourished like a lily and strengthened like an oak.

Misfortune, however, was not to stop here; the duchess was taken ill of a lingering disease, and, in spite of all that science could do, and in spite of all the care and attention of her husband and son, and, indeed, of every one round her, she died on the 8th of January, 1538.

The duke was inconsolable, and Emmanuel was almost in despair; but luckily he had a companion who had known grief, and who shared his sorrow with him.

Time, however, calms down the wildest sorrow, and the great events of the day at last claimed the attention of the duke and prince.

A congress had just been decided on, to take place at Nice, between Pope Paul the Third (Alexander Farnese), Francis the First, and Charles the Fifth.

The points under discussion were to be the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, the creation of a duchy for Louis Farnese, and the restoration of his estates to the Duke of Savoy.

Nice had been chosen by the pope and Charles the Fifth, in hopes that the hospitality shown him by his uncle would induce Francis the First to make concession.

Charles the Good, however, feared that, instead of giving back what they had taken before, his holiness and their majesties would prefer to take what was left; but he was obliged to satisfy himself with shutting his son up in the citadel which commands Nice, and giving orders to the governor not to open the gates to any body of men whatever, whether they demanded admittance in the name of the king, the pope, or the emperor.

He then went himself to meet Paul the Third, who was to arrive before either of the others.

When the pope was about a league from Nice, a letter arrived from the duke, ordering the governor to prepare apartments in the citadel for the pope.

This letter was brought by the captain of his holiness's guard, who demanded that he and his two hundred men should be admitted into the citadel, in order to attend upon the pontiff.

Here was an awkward predicament; the letter spoke of the pope, but not of the captain and his two hundred men, and the very thing that the pope demanded was exactly what he was forbidden to grant.

The governor called a council, at which Emmanuel Philibert assisted, although he was only eleven years of age; but it was thought that his presence would raise the courage of his defenders.

While the deliberations were going on, the child noticed a wooden model of the disputed citadel hanging upon the wall.

"On my honor, gentlemen," said he to the councilors, who had been deliberating for upward of an hour without advancing a point—"on my honor, gentlemen, here is an easy way out of the fix; since we have got a stone citadel and a wooden citadel, let us give the wooden one to the pope, and keep the stone one for ourselves."

"Gentlemen," said the governor, "this child shows us our duty. The pope may have the wooden citadel, if he likes, but I swear to Heaven that while I live he shall never have the stone one!"

The two speeches were reported to the pope, who said no more about coming inside the citadel, and took up his abode in the convent of the Cordeliers.

The emperor and the King of France now arrived, and pitched their tents on the opposite side of the town, and the congress began.

Unluckily the results were not exactly what had been expected.

The emperor claimed Savoy and Piedmont for his brother-in-law.

Francis the First claimed the duchy of Milan for the Duc d'Orleans.

Finally, the pope, who was looking out for a settle-

ment for *his* son, demanded that a prince who was no relation either to Francis or Charles should be Duke of Milan, on condition of paying tribute to the former and receiving the crown from the latter.

In fact, every one wanted something impossible, and in direct opposition to both the others.

Thus, as no one would give way, they agreed on a truce, which was equally needed by all parties.

Francis the First, to renovate his half-wasted army, and his totally wasted treasury; Charles, to revenge himself upon the Turks for their incursions on Sicily and Naples; and Paul the Third, to establish his son firmly in Parma and Placentia, if he could not get Milan for him.

A ten years' truce was agreed upon, the date being fixed by Francis the First.

"Ten years or nothing," said he, peremptorily; and ten years were given.

Nevertheless, it was Francis who broke the truce at the end of the fourth year.

Charles the Third saw these conferences break up, without any one appropriating his estates, with the most supreme delight, and he found himself left in exactly the same position in which they had found him, except that he was so much the poorer for the cost of their entertainment.

The pope was the only person who had got any good out of the business; he had settled two marriages.

Charles the Fifth, having now got rid of Francis, set to work against the Turks; and his preparations

for the campaign were so gigantic that they lasted two years.

At the end of this time, just as the fleet was about to set sail, Charles the Good determined to go and present Emmanuel Philibert, who was now just thirteen, to the emperor, and, as a matter of course, Scianca-Ferro and Leone went with him.

On their arrival, the duke, with his son and retinue, were immediately ushered into the presence of the emperor.

Charles the Fifth embraced his brother-in-law, and wished to embrace his nephew; but the latter disengaged himself gracefully from the august arms, and kneeling at the feet of the emperor, with his squire on one side and his page on the other, before his father had time to interfere, he earnestly begged the emperor to permit him to attach himself to his fortunes.

The emperor thanked him gravely for that mark of attachment, and promised that if he were in the same mind some years hence, the opportunity would not be wanting. And raising the young prince, he embraced him, and, as if to console him for the refusal, he took off his collar of the *toison-d'or*, and threw it over the boy's neck.

"Ah, by Jove!" said Scianca-Ferro, "that's rather better than the cardinal's hat."

CHAPTER IX.

LEONE-LEONA.

As the emperor had foreseen, hardly had Charles the Good returned to Nice than he received a message from Francis, proposing to return Savoy to his uncle on condition of his giving up Piedmont to be annexed to the French crown.

The duke was indignant at such a proposition, and sent the messengers back to his nephew, forbidding them ever to come back again.

What was it that gave Francis the courage to declare war against the emperor for the fourth time? for this demand against Charles of Savoy was tantamount to a declaration of war against Charles of Spain.

It was two new allies he had made, and these were Luther and Solyman, the Huguenots of Germany, and the Saracens of Africa, two somewhat strange allies for the "most Christian king," "the first-born of the Church."

It is strange that, during this long struggle between Francis and Charles, it was invariably the "chivalrous monarch," as he was called, who broke his faith, and it was he who, after losing everything but honor at the battle of Pavia, managed to soil that irretrievably by signing a treaty which he never intended to keep.

This time it was Savoy who was menaced first.

The duke withdrew to Verceil, where he set about mustering the few forces he could still command. Nice in the meantime was left under the guardianship of a hardy Savoyard, called Odinet de Montfort.

Emmanuel Philibert begged his father to allow him to remain at Nice, and there make his first essay in martial life; but Charles the Good thought that the life of his only son was too valuable to be risked in this way, and decidedly refused; but there was not the same objection to be made to Scianca-Ferro, and consequently that stalwart young squire had his desire at last.

The duke and Philibert, with Leone, who remained with them, were scarcely out of sight of Nice in one direction before a fleet of two hundred sail, partly French and partly Turkish, made its appearance in another, and casting anchor at Villafranca, disgorged ten thousand Mohammedans, led by Khan-Eddin, and twelve thousand Frenchmen, under the command of the Duc d'Enghien.

The siege was indeed terrible; the garrison fiercely disputed every inch of ground, and both gentlemen, soldiers, and peaceable citizens fought like devils. The town was attacked at ten different points, and the Turks and French entered by ten different breaches. The Savoyards defended every street; they poured down shot and missiles from every house; they made desperate stands at every open square; they hurled themselves upon their assailants; but in vain. The fire marched in the steps of the

invaders, and when Odinet de Montfort retired to the castle, he left his enemies in possession of a mass of blackened ruins.

The next day a herald summoned the general to surrender, but he shook his head sturdily.

"My friend," said he, "you have addressed yourself to the wrong man; I am called Montfort; my arms are impaled, and my motto is, 'Stand firm!'"

Montfort was as good as his motto: he stood firm till the duke approached from one side with four thousand Piedmontese, and Alphonso d'Avalos from the other with six thousand Spaniards, whom Charles the Fifth had dispatched post-haste to the relief of his brother-in-law, and then the Turkish and French armies came to the conclusion that the best thing they could do was to take themselves off; and they decamped accordingly.

Great was the joy, both of the duke and his subjects, on his entry into Nice, ruinous as it was; and happy was the meeting of Philibert and his squire, who had fully supported his name of Scianca-Ferro, and who, when his foster-brother asked him how he had got on, when he had real breast-plates and shields to cut at, answered:

"Oh, they are not as tough as the oaks, or as hard as the rocks; I don't think much of them."

The treaty of Cressy, which was signed on the 14th of October, 1544, stipulated that Philippe d'Orleans, second son of Francis the First, should marry the emperor's daughter in two years' time, and that she should receive Milan and the Pays-Bas



The three youths were now growing up—Leone was in his fourteenth year, Emmanuel was sixteen, and Scianca-Ferro six months his senior. Page 75.

The Page of the Duke of Savoy

as her dowry: while on his side Francis was to renounce all claim to the kingdom of Naples, and to return to the Duke of Savoy all he had taken from him, with the exception of Pignerol and Montmeilorn.

All this was to take place at the time of the marriage.

The three youths were now growing up—Leone having attained his fourteenth year, while Emmanuel was sixteen, and Scianca-Ferro six months his senior.

It was in vain that Emmanuel tried to discover what was passing in the mind of his page; but Leone seemed to grow more sad and thoughtful every day, and the older he grew the less he seemed to take part in his companions' sports. They passed their whole time in mock combats and trials of strength and skill—Scianca-Ferro being endowed by nature with an extraordinary share of the former attribute, while Emmanuel excelled in the latter; but Leone only stood and looked on, or retired into some corner and read. The only exercise which Leone seemed really to care about was riding; and doubtless he saw in that a method of following Emmanuel, but as his sadness increased he gradually gave up even this.

One thing seemed utterly incomprehensible, and that was, that when he heard anything said about the fact that his companion would some day be a rich and powerful prince, his countenance grew even more melancholy than usual.

One fine day a letter came from the Emperor

Charles the Fifth, proposing a marriage between Emmanuel Philibert and the daughter of King Ferdinand, Charles's brother, when, and to the intense astonishment of the duke and Scianca-Ferro, Leone suddenly burst into tears and rushed from the room.

On another occasion Emmanuel had missed his page for a longer time than usual, and asking what had become of him, he was told that he had been seen to enter the church, and that he was probably there still.

Emmanuel ran to the church, and casting his eyes round, he saw Leone on his knees in the most retired corner of the building.

Emmanuel approached almost near enough to touch him without his being aware of his presence.

Then he made one step in advance, and laid his hand on Leone's shoulder, and called him by his name.

Leone trembled, and stared at Emmanuel with a startled air.

"What are you doing in the church at this hour, Leone?" asked the prince, uneasily.

"May Heaven give me strength to carry my project into execution," answered Leone.

"And what is this project? May not I know, dear Leone?"

"You will know before any one else, Emmanuel."

"You promise me, Leone?"

"Yes, monseigneur," answered the young man, with a sad smile.

Emmanuel took his hand, and tried to draw him from the church.

But Leone softly withdrew his hand, as he had been in the habit of doing for some months, and made a sign for the prince to leave him.

"I will come directly," said he; "leave me a few moments more."

There was something so solemn and at the same time so appealing in the young man's manner, that Emmanuel could not refuse him; he left the church, but waited at the door for him.

Leone trembled when he found him there, but did not seem astonished.

"And shall I know this secret soon?" asked the prince.

"I hope to have strength to tell you to-morrow, monseigneur," answered the page.

"Where?"

"In this church."

"At what hour?"

"Come at the same time you came to-day."

"And till then, Leone?" asked Emmanuel, in a tone of voice which was almost beseeching.

"Till then I hope that monseigneur will not force me to leave my room; I have need of solitude and reflection."

Emmanuel looked at his page with an indefinable feeling of apprehension; he conducted him to his own room. There Leone wished to kiss the prince's hand, but the latter opened his arms to embrace him; but

Leone gently repulsed him, and said, with an accent of inexpressible sadness:

“Till to-morrow, then, monseigneur.”

And he withdrew into his own room.

Emmanuel stood immovable, and the grinding of the bolt, as it shot into the staple, seemed to cut into his soul.

He waited with impatience for the morrow.

The morning passed slowly and heavily without seeing Leone, and the hours seemed to linger and loiter on their road. At last the appointed hour arrived, and Emmanuel set out for the chapel with a feeling as if his whole fate was to be decided at it.

The treaty of Cressy, which was signed a year before, and which was to have decided the question of the final restoration or alienation of his estates, had seemed to him to be of far less importance.

He found the young man in exactly the same position as on the previous day. He had evidently been praying, and his face bore an expression of gentle and melancholy resignation. It was evident that the resolution which he had been forming the day before was now confirmed.

Emmanuel went joyfully up to him; Leone received him with a sad smile.

“Well?” asked Philibert.

“Well, monseigneur, I have a favor to ask of you.”

“What, Leone?”

“You see how delicate and unfit for all bodily exercise I am. You need men like Scianca-Ferro to

grace your princely future, not of timid children, like myself, monseigneur."

And, in spite of Leone's struggles, two great tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Monseigneur, I have a singular favor to ask of you; I want to leave you."

Emmanuel started back; he had passed his life with Scianca-Ferro and Leone, and he had never contemplated a separation from either of them.

"Leave me!" exclaimed he, in utter astonishment.

Leone hung his head, and did not answer.

"Leave me!" repeated Emmanuel, in an accent of despair; "leave me!—impossible!"

"It must be," answered Leone, in an almost inaudible voice.

Emmanuel clasped his hands over his face as if he were going mad, then he let his arms drop heavily, and stood there silent and inert.

"Leave me!" repeated he, at last; "leave me, who found you dying; who received you as if a special providence had sent you; who have always treated you as a brother—oh, Leone!"

"It is for that very reason, monseigneur; because I owe you so much, and can do nothing to repay it, that I wish to retire and pray for you all my life."

"Pray for me!" repeated Emmanuel with a stupefied air; "pray for me! and where?"

"In some monastery, where a poor orphan will be more in his place than at a brilliant court as yours will one day become."

“ My mother, my dear mother ! you who loved me so well, what would you say if you heard this ? ”

“ I take Heaven to witness,” said Leone, laying his hand solemnly on the prince’s arm, “ I take Heaven to witness that she would say that I did right.”

There was such an accent of conviction and solemnity about Leone’s manner, as he said this, that Emmanuel was entirely staggered.

“ Leone,” said he, “ do as you will ; you are free. I have tried to enslave your heart, but not your body ; I only ask you not to decide hastily—take a week—”

“ Oh,” broke in Leone, bursting into tears, “ if I do not go now, when Heaven gives me the strength, I shall never go—and I tell you I *must* go.”

“ Must go ! But why, in Heaven’s name, Leone ? ”

But to this question Leone only opposed that obstinate silence which he had twice before manifested, and Emmanuel was still entreating for an explanation, when he heard the steps of a stranger in the chapel.

It was a servant, who brought word that the duke wished to see his son instantly.

Important dispatches had just been received from France.

“ You see, dear Leone, I must leave you now,” said Emmanuel ; “ I will see you again this evening, and then, if you are still in the same mind, you shall leave me, if you think it your duty.”

Leone did not answer, but sunk on his knees and sobbed as if his heart were breaking.

Emmanuel left the church slowly and unwillingly, and turned every instant to look back as he went away.

Leone remained for more than an hour in prayer, and then returned home more calm; his resolution, which had been almost overcome while Emmanuel was there, had now returned, led on by that icy-hearted angel whom we call Reason.

Once in his room, however, the idea that Philibert might return at any moment to try a last effort, disturbed the boy, and every sound seemed to him to be his friend's step in the corridor. It came at last; the door opened slowly, and Emmanuel entered with a sad face, in which, however, hope still shone.

"Well," said he, after closing the door, "have you reflected, Leone?"

"Monseigneur, when you left me I had reflected long and deeply."

"And you persist in leaving me?"

Leone could not answer; he bowed his head in sign of assent.

"And that, forsooth, because I am to be a great prince and have a grand court?"

Leone once more bowed his head.

"Well, then, reassure yourself," added Emmanuel, bitterly; "for I am this day poorer and more unlucky than I have ever been."

Leone raised his head, and Emmanuel saw the astonishment beaming from his great eyes through his tears.

"The Duc d'Orleans is dead, so that the treaty of Cressy is nullified," said Emmanuel.

"And—and—" repeated Leone, with eager curiosity marked in every line of his face.

"And," continued Emmanuel, "as my uncle, Charles the Fifth, will not give up the duchy of Milan to my cousin, Francis the First, my cousin, Francis the First, will not return the provinces he has taken from my father, Charles the Good."

"But," inquired Leone, with intense anxiety, "the marriage with the daughter of King Ferdinand is still to take place?"

"My dear Leone," said the young man, "the emperor wished to marry his niece to the Comte de Presse, the Prince of Piedmont, and the Duke of Savoy, not to poor Philibert Emmanuel, who, of all his possessions, has only Nice, the valley of Aosta, and three or four miserable little parcels of land left to him."

Leone gave a cry of joy, which was evidently irrepressible, but he almost instantly recovered his self-possession.

"It matters not," said he, "it can make no change in my determination."

"And so," said Emmanuel, looking sadder and more cast down at the boy's resolution than he had been at the loss of his provinces, "and so you are still going to leave me, Leone?"

"What was necessary yesterday is equally so to-day, Emmanuel."

"But yesterday I was rich, powerful, and the

heir to a ducal crown—to-day I am poor and friendless, and have nothing but my sword; in leaving me yesterday you were only cruel—in leaving me to-day you are thankless and ungrateful. Adieu, Leone.”

“Ungrateful!” cried Leone; “oh, Heavens listen to him! I ungrateful!”

And then, as the young prince was leaving the room, with a stern face and clinched teeth, Leone exclaimed:

“Oh, Emmanuel, Emmanuel, for God’s sake, do not leave me thus, or I shall die!”

Emmanuel turned, and saw his companion standing with his arms stretched toward him, pale, trembling, and ready to faint.

The prince sprung to his young friend, and threw his arms round him, and pressed his lips to his with a blind, unreasoning, unconscious tenderness.

Leone uttered a wild cry of pain, as if a red-hot iron had touched him, and then sunk back, and fainted.

The clasp of his doublet pressed upon his throat; Emmanuel undid it; he tore open his ruffle to admit the air, and burst off the buttons of his shirt.

But then it was Emmanuel who started back with a cry, not of grief, but of surprise, astonishment, and joy.

Leone was a woman.

Leone soon recovered from that fainting fit, but from that time forth Emmanuel was the lover of *Leona*.

There was no further question of separation;

everything—sadness, solitude, desire for retirement, all was explained without a word. When Leona discovered her love for Emmanuel Philibert she had wished to leave him, but now that he returned that love, she gave him her life with it.

To the world the page was still a young man, called Leone.

To Emmanuel Philibert, alone, the page was a lovely young girl called Leona.

As a prince, Emmanuel had lost Brescia, Piedmont, and all Savoy, except Nice, the valley of Aosta, and the town of Verceil.

But, as a man, he had lost nothing, for in Scianca-Ferro and Leona he had left to him the two most precious gifts of divine liberality—devotion and love.

CHAPTER X.

THE THREE WARNINGS.

LET us now say a few words regarding the political events of the period that passed between the scene we have just related and the time at which our book opens.

Emmanuel had said that he had nothing left but his sword.

The storm which John Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, had raised by the famous Protestant League

of Germany, burst suddenly over the empire, and gave Philibert another opportunity of offering that sword to Charles the Fifth. This time it was accepted, and Emmanuel Philibert, accompanied as usual by Scianca-Ferro and Leone, set out on the 27th of May, 1545, to join the emperor at Worms.

He was followed by forty gentlemen—the largest army that could be raised in the dominions of the man who still bore the titles of Duke of Savoy, Chablais, and Aosta; Prince of Piedmont, Achaia, and the Morea; Count of Geneva, Nice, Asti, Brescia, and Romont; Baron de Vaud, de Gex, and de Faucigny; and Lord of Verceil, Beaufort, Bugey, and Fribourg; Prince and perpetual Vicegerent of the Holy Empire, Marquis of Italy, and King of Cyprus.

Charles received his nephew most graciously, and gave orders that he should be called “your majesty,” even in his presence, on account of his father’s claim to the kingdom of Cyprus, and Emmanuel Philibert repaid it by prodigies of valor at the battles of Ingoldstadt and Muhlberg.

This latter terminated the struggle, and that evening ten out of the forty gentlemen were unable to answer to their chief’s call.

Scianca-Ferro recognized the elector by his barbed horse, his gigantic size, and the terrible blows which he rained around him, and singled him out as an adversary; and most assuredly if he had not had his name of Scianca-Ferro before, he would have gained it that day.

With one blow of his terrible battle-ax he broke the right arm of the prince, and with a second he cut clean through his visor, and inflicted such a fearful wound that the prisoner was obliged to name himself to the emperor, his face being nothing but one ghastly, bleeding mass.

A month before this, Francis the First, on his death-bed, had told his son that he believed that all the misfortunes of France were a punishment for the alliances with the Turks and Protestants, and that Charles the Fifth had Heaven on his side; and he charged the future king to live in peace with the emperor.

Thus arose a momentary truce, which Emmanuel took advantage of to pay a visit to his father at Vercell; and the extreme tenderness of the interview was perhaps the result of a presentiment that they should never meet again.

The dying recommendation of his father had produced but little impression upon the mind of Henry the Second, who, though devoid of military genius, was passionately fond of war.

The struggle once more burst forth in Italy, and Charles, as usual, united his forces in Flanders; therefore our eyes naturally turned to the north to search for Emmanuel Philibert at the commencement of his work.

We have related how, after the siege of Metz and the taking of Therouanne and Heslin, the emperor had charged his nephew to rebuild the towns, and had appointed him to the supreme command of the

army in Flanders, and to the governorship of the Low Countries.

As if to counterbalance this great honor, an equally great grief struck our hero; the duke Charles the Good died on the 17th of September, 1553.

It was in his quality of general, and with the sadness produced by his father's death, still imprinted on his face, that we first encountered Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy.

When he returned to his tent after the scene related in the opening of this story, he found a messenger from Charles to say that the emperor wished to see him instantly.

Emmanuel sprung to the ground, flung the bridle to one of his followers, and with a nod to his squire and page to signify that he would soon return, and putting his sword under his arm, he started for the tent of the man who held the world in awe.

The sentry presented arms; and he entered, preceded by the messenger.

The emperor's tent was divided into four compartments, which were respectively a dining-room, anteroom, bedroom, and study. Each room was ornamented by some trophy of victory.

Merely in passing through the little anteroom, the eagle eye of the general had remarked a man with his hands bound and guarded by four soldiers. He was dressed as a peasant, but it seemed to Emmanuel that neither his hair nor his skin was in keeping with the costume.

Philibert imagined him to be some French spy,

with regard to whom the emperor wished to see him.

Charles the Fifth, who was waiting in the study, was a man of five-and-fifty, who, though short, was powerfully built, and whose eye still sparkled brilliantly from beneath his bushy eyebrows at all times when he was not in pain.

His hair was already gray, but his short thick beard was still fiery red.

During his forty years' reign, Charles the Fifth had attained as much command over his countenance as any man in Europe; but yet Emmanuel saw at a glance that something serious was wrong.

Charles turned and received his nephew with marked friendliness of manner.

Emmanuel bowed respectfully.

However urgent the business about which the emperor sent for any one, he invariably commenced the conversation by something relative to his visitor's affairs or interests.

"Well," said he, in Italian, "what news from the camp?"

"Sire," answered Emmanuel, "an event has taken place, the tidings of which would soon reach you, even if I did not bring them myself. In order to preserve your authority, I have been forced to make an example of one who endangered it."

"One who endangered it?" repeated Charles, absently, for he was already plunged in his own thoughts; "and who was that?"

Emmanuel commenced the history of what had

passed between Count Waldeck and himself; but it soon became evident that Charles was listening with his ears only, that his thoughts were running on far different subjects.

"Very good," said he, for the third time, as Philibert finished.

There was a short silence before the emperor recommenced the conversation, but at last, turning to his nephew:

"I have also bad news to relate," said he.

"From whence, your majesty?"

"From Rome."

"Then the pope has been elected?"

"Yes."

"And he is—"

"Pierre Caraffa, under the title of Paul the Fourth. He has always been a troublesome man, even at the Court of Spain. Ah!" added Charles, with an expression of fatigue, "the twenty years' strife which I had with his predecessors is about to recommence, and I am almost worn out."

"Time will show, sire," said Philibert.

A noise was heard outside.

"What's the matter now?" exclaimed Charles, angrily. "I gave orders that we were not to be disturbed. Go and see what it is, Emmanuel."

The duke raised the curtain, and after speaking to some one in the next compartment, "Sire," said he, "it is a messenger from Spain."

"Let him come in, my child; doubtless he brings news of my mother."

The messenger made his appearance.

"You bring news of my mother, do you not?" said Charles, addressing him in Spanish.

The messenger did not reply, but he handed a letter to the duke.

"Give it me, Emmanuel, give it me; she is well, is she not?"

The messenger still kept silence, and Emmanuel hesitated about giving up the letter, which he had noticed was sealed with black.

Charles also noticed the seal, and trembled when he saw it.

"Ha!" said he, "this is the first misfortune that follows Paul's election. Give it me, my child—give it me."

"Sire," said Emmanuel, giving him the letter, "remember that you are a man."

"Yes," said Charles, "so Diogenes told Alexander;" and he broke the fatal seal with trembling fingers.

It contained but few lines, and yet he read and reread it over and over again, while tears flowed down the cheeks which war and ambition had hardened to the world.

When he had finished; he handed it to Emmanuel Philibert, and sinking down on his couch:

"Dead!" murmured he, "dead! and on the 13th of April, the very day of Caraffa's nomination. Ah, my son, I told you that that man would bring me misfortune."

Emmanuel cast his eyes on the letter, and saw that

it was from the royal notary of Tordesillas, announcing the death of Charles the Fifth's mother, Jeanne de Castile, better known as *Jeanne la Folle*.

At that moment the curtain opened once more, and gave entrance to an officer, whose dusty and travel-worn appearance bespoke him the bearer of pressing news.

The face of the emperor was so sad that the groom, who, on account of the importance of the tidings, had, contrary to etiquette, introduced the messenger into Charles's cabinet, stopped him short; but Charles had already seen him.

"Come in," said he, in Flemish; "what is it?"

"Your majesty," said the officer, kneeling, "King Henry the Second of France has taken the field, with his army divided into three bodies; the first under his own command and that of the Constable de Montmorency; the second under the Marshal de Saint Andre; and the third under the Duc de Nevers."

"Well—what else?" asked the emperor.

"The King of France has besieged and taken Marienburg, and he is now marching upon Bouvine."

"And what day did he lay siege to Marienburg?"

"On the 13th of April, your majesty."

"Well," said Charles in French, and turning to Emmanuel, "what do you say to the date?"

"It is a fatal one indeed."

"That will do; we will not detain you longer," said the emperor to the officer; then turning to the groom:

"Let that gentleman be cared for as though he were the bearer of good news," said he.

This time Emmanuel did not wait to be questioned; before even the curtain had closed:

"At all events," said he, "if we can do nothing to remedy the election of Paul the Fourth, or the death of your dearly beloved mother, we can do something to remedy the taking of Marienburg!"

"What?"

"By Heaven, we can retake it!"

"Yes, you may, Emmanuel, but I can not."

"Why not, your majesty?"

Charles the Fifth slid from the sofa, and endeavored to walk, but it was with pain and difficulty that he accomplished a few steps. Then, shaking his head, he turned toward his nephew.

"Look at my legs, Emmanuel; they will no longer support me either on foot or on horseback. Look at my hands; they can no longer clasp a sword; and the hand that can not clasp a sword is not fit to sway a scepter."

"What, sire!" exclaimed Emmanuel, in astonishment.

"Yes," answered the emperor, "I have often thought of it, and I think of it more and more every day. Everything warns me that it is time to resign my place to another. The surprise of Innspruck, where I was obliged to fly half naked—the flight from Metz, where I lost a third of my army, and the half of my reputation—and finally, this terrible disease, which no human strength can resist—which

seems utterly beyond the help of medicine—this cruel, pitiless disease which seizes upon the whole body, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, which fills the nerves with intolerable pain, which twists the very bones, and seems to freeze the very marrow, and to turn the oil of the joints into sand, this enemy which is more cruel than fire or the sword, and which ruins the very soul itself from mere excess of physical suffering—these all cry, ‘Enough of power, enough of sovereignty; retire into the obscurity of life before reaching that of the tomb. Charles by grace divine, Charles the August, Charles of Germany, Castile and Leon, of Grenada, Aragon and Naples, of Sicily, Majorca and Sardinia, of the Isles and Indies, of the Pacific and Atlantic, make way for another—for another!’”

Emmanuel was about to speak, but the emperor stopped him.

“And then—and then,” repeated he, “there is something else I had to tell you. As if the dissolution of this poor body were too tardy for my enemies, as if defeat, heresy, and the gout were not enough, the poniard of the assassin comes to hasten it.”

“What! the poniard?” cried Emmanuel.

The emperor’s face grew clouded.

“An attempt to assassinate me has been made to-day,” said he.

“An attempt made to-day to assassinate your majesty,” repeated Emmanuel, with an accent almost of terror.

"Why not?" asked the emperor. "Did you not tell me just now to remember that I was but a man?"

"Ah!" cried Emmanuel, "and who is the villain?"

"Yes," answered the emperor, "who is the villain? I have the poniard, but not the hand."

"But," said Emmanuel, "that man whom I saw bound in the ante-chamber?"

"Yes, he is the villain, as you call him—but the question is, who is he sent by? Is it by the Turk?—I do not believe it. Solyman is a loyal enemy. Henry the Second I do not even suspect. Paul the Fourth has not been long enough pope; and then, Rome generally prefers poison to the poniard. I am at a loss, and yet I would give much to know. Listen, Emmanuel; this man refuses to speak; take him, lead him to your tent, do what you like with him, but he *must* speak. The more powerful the enemy, and the nearer home, the more important it is to know him."

Then, after an instant's silence, and fixing his eyes on Emmanuel:

"By the bye," said he, "your cousin, Philip the Second, has arrived at Brussels."

The change in the conversation was so sudden that Emmanuel started.

He raised his eyes and encountered those of the emperor.

This time he shuddered.

"Well?" asked he.

"Well," answered Charles, "I shall be glad to see

my son. Might it not be said that he foresaw the exact moment, and came to succeed me? I recommend my assassin to you, Emmanuel."

"In an hour your majesty shall know all you desire."

And with a low reverence to the emperor, Emmanuel withdrew.

CHAPTER XI.

As he went out Emmanuel looked more carefully at the prisoner, and was confirmed in his former idea that he had to deal with a gentleman and not with a peasant.

He beckoned the sergeant to approach him, and said:

"By the emperor's orders you are to bring that man to my tent."

The duke's tent was not a grand pavilion with four compartments, like that of the emperor; it was an ordinary soldier's tent, divided in the middle by a canvas partition.

Scianca-Ferro was seated by the entrance.

"Stay where you are, but take a weapon of some sort," said Emmanuel.

"What for?" asked the squire.

"In a few minutes a man who has attempted to murder the emperor will be brought here. I am going to examine him alone. Notice him as he

enters, and if he tries to break the word which he will doubtless give me, and escape, stop him, but living—mind, it is important to take him alive.”

“Then,” answered Scianca-Ferro, “I do not see that I want any weapon at all.”

“As you like, only stop him.”

“Never fear,” answered our Hercules.

On entering the tent Emmanuel found Leona waiting for him.

“Ah, you have come back to me at last, dear!” exclaimed she, starting up. “What a terrible scene we passed through this morning. You might well say that, from my paleness and emotion, I might be taken for a woman.”

“Yes, Leona—and yet these scenes are common in a soldier’s life; you must try and accustom yourself to them, my love.” Then with a smile, “Take an example by Scianca-Ferro,” said he.

“How can you say that, even in joke, Emmanuel? Scianca-Ferro is a man; and though he loves you as well as one man can love another, yet my love for you is something sweeter and more tender than friendship.”

“My dear love,” answered Emmanuel, “I know well that your whole soul is devotion, and therefore I have neither reserve nor secrets from you.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Because a great criminal is about to be brought here for me to interrogate, and perhaps the revelations he may make may compromise even crowned heads. Go to the other side of the tent, love: listen

if you like; what is only heard by you and me is the same as if I alone heard it."

Leona smiled.

"I should not care to tell any one but you," said she, as she retired behind the partition.

She was just in time. As she left, the sergeant ushered in the prisoner.

Emmanuel was seated in the shadow of the canvas, from whence he might study the face of the assassin without being observed himself.

The prisoner was a man of from thirty to thirty-five, over the middle height, and of so aristocratic a face and bearing that Emmanuel had instantly recognized him as a gentleman in spite of his disguise.

"Leave monsieur alone with me," said the duke.

As the sergeant left, the prisoner fixed his quick, piercing eye on Emmanuel, who rose and went straight up to him.

"Monsieur," said the duke, "the soldiers did not understand your rank, and they have bound you. You will give me your word of honor as a gentleman that you will not try to escape, and I will untie your hands."

"I am a peasant, and not a gentleman," answered the assassin, "and therefore I can not give you my word as a gentleman."

"If you are a peasant, then you will not bind yourself to anything by giving your word as a gentleman. Do so, then, for it is the only pledge I ask of you."

The prisoner made no answer.

"Then," said Emmanuel, "I shall loosen your hands without your word of honor. I am not afraid to be alone with any man on earth, whether he has engaged his word or not." And the duke began to untie his hands.

The stranger bounded back.

"Wait!" cried he. "On the word of a gentleman I engage not to fly."

"Ah!" said Emmanuel, with a smile, "one blooded horse knows another," and he finished untying the prisoner's hands.

"Now that you are free, let us talk," said Emmanuel.

The prisoner looked sternly at his hands, which were cut by the cords, then letting them drop by his side, "Let us talk," repeated he, with an ironical smile, "and what about?"

"About the motives that prompted you to commit so great a crime," answered Emmanuel.

"I have said nothing about them," said the unknown, "and I have nothing to say."

"You have told nothing to the emperor, whom you wished to kill; that was natural. You have told nothing to the soldiers who arrested you, but to a gentleman, and one who treats you as his equal, you will tell all."

"What good would it be were I to do so?"

"What good? I will tell you, for I do not look upon you as an assassin hired for money, by some coward who did not dare to strike the blow himself,

in order that you may be beheaded like a gentleman instead of being hung like a thief."

"They threatened to make me speak by torture," said the stranger; "let them try."

"The torture would be a useless cruelty; you would be mutilated, but not conquered; you would keep your secret and leave only shame to your persecutors. What I want is a free and open confidence; I want the truth. I am a gentleman, a general, and a prince, and I desire that you should speak to me as you would to your confessor. If you do not think me worthy of your confidence, it is because you yourself are unworthy to speak to me, because you are one of those scoundrels with whom I am unwilling to confound you, and because the deed which you attempted was prompted by some base passion which you dare not confess, because—"

The prisoner drew himself up proudly, and interrupting Emmanuel:

"I am Odoardo Maraviglia," said he. "Think of the past, and do not insult me."

At the name of Odoardo Maraviglia, Emmanuel seemed to hear a stifled cry at the further corner of the tent; but the memories which crowded on his mind left him little time to think of other things, for the name of Maraviglia had been the pretext for the war in which he had been despoiled of his possessions.

"Odoardo Maraviglia! Are you, then, the son of the French ambassador to Milan, Francesco Maraviglia?"

"I am."

Emmanuel turned his thoughts to his early youth; the name had remained in his memory, but that was all—it brought no history with it.

"Your name," said the duke, "is that of a gentleman, but it does not awaken any circumstance in my mind which in any way bears upon the crime you have attempted to commit."

Odoardo smiled scornfully.

"Ask the most august emperor if his memory is as blank as yours," said he.

"Monsieur," said Emmanuel, "at the time of the disappearance of the Count Francesco Maraviglia I was only eight years of age; it is not wonderful, therefore, that I am ignorant of the details of an affair which I believe remained a mystery to the whole world."

"Well, monseigneur, I will explain this mystery. You know that that contemptible prince, the last of the Sforzas, was incessantly vacillating between Francis the First and Charles the Fifth, as fortune favored one or the other. My father was the French envoy extraordinary to the court of Sforza. In 1534, while the emperor was in Africa, the Duke of Saxe, an ally of Francis, signed a treaty with the King of the Romans. Clement the Seventh, another ally of the French, had just excommunicated Henry the Eighth of England, and the whole current of events in Italy was against Charles.

"Sforza abandoned the emperor, to whom he still owed four hundred thousand ducats, and placed

his fortunes in the hands of the French envoy. It was a great triumph, and Francesco Maraviglia was imprudent enough to boast of it, and his words were carried across the sea, and excited the revenge of the emperor, who was then before Tunis. Unluckily, fortune is changeable, and in two months from that date, Clement the Seventh, who was the stronghold of the French in Italy, died, and Tunis fell before the arms of the emperor, who led his victorious army back to Italy. It was necessary to find a scapegoat, and Francesco Maraviglia was selected. It happened that some quarrel arose between the servants of the French envoy and some of the Milanais, in which two of the latter were killed.

“Sforza was only waiting for a pretext to make his peace with the emperor; this gave it him, and my father, who for twelve months had been more the master of Milan than the duke himself, was arrested and thrown into prison like a common malefactor. My mother and sister, a child of four years of age, were in Milan with my father. I, being one of the pages of Francis the First, remained in Paris. They dragged my father from my mother's arms without telling them why he was arrested or where they were carrying him. A week passed, during which the countess tried every plan she could devise to discover what had become of her husband, but in vain. They knew Maraviglia to be immensely rich, and feared that his wife might buy his liberty. One night a man knocked at the door of my father's palace, and asked to speak to the countess in private.

Under the circumstances everything was important; my mother had caused it to be understood that she would give five hundred ducats to any one who would tell her where her husband was, and this man might possibly be the bearer of some tidings.

“The conjecture was right; the man was one of the jailers of the fortress of Milan, who not only brought tidings of my father, but also a letter from him. My mother paid the man his five hundred ducats when she recognized the handwriting.

“The letter contained the details of the arrest, but did not express any uneasiness. My mother answered, begging him to tell her what to do, and saying that she was ready to devote her life and her fortune to his service.

“Five nights after this the man returned. The situation of the prisoner looked more serious; he had been removed to a different cell, where he was kept in the most perfect secrecy. The jailer said that his life was in danger.

“Did this man desire to obtain some great sum by working on a wife’s fears, or was he speaking the truth?—that was the question. My mother’s terror inclined her to believe him, and although his answers to her questions displayed greed and cupidity, yet they also displayed readiness and apparent truth.

“She gave him the same sum as the former time, and told him at all hazards to devise some mode of escape for the count, and that he should receive five thousand ducats as soon as the plan was arranged,

and twenty thousand more as soon as her husband was in safety.

“The jailer, to whom this was an enormous fortune, went away, promising to do his best. My mother had friends at the court; and she learned through them that the count’s position was even worse than the jailer had represented. They were about to try him as a spy.

“My mother waited impatiently for the arrival of the jailer, but one thing consoled her. Of what could they accuse the count?—of the death of the two Milanais? That had only been an encounter between servants and peasants, with which a gentleman and an envoy could not have anything to do. What made her most uneasy was a vague rumor that there would not be any prosecution at all, but that her husband would still be condemned. At last the nocturnal visitor came once more; he had concerted a plan of escape, and came to submit it to the countess.

“The prisoner’s cell was next but one to the jailer’s lodge, and the man had the keys of both. He proposed, however, to open a passage through the wall of the outside cell into his own room, exactly behind his bed; they would then enter the outer cell through this opening, remove the count’s irons there, and then lead him out into the lodge, where he would find a rope ladder, which would lead down into the moat in the most solitary and obscure part of the wall. Here he would find a carriage waiting to carry him out of the country without an instant’s delay.

“The countess approved the plan, but, fearing that they might deceive her husband by telling him that he was free when he really was not, she insisted on being present at the flight. The jailer objected, in consequence of the difficulty in introducing her into the prison; but the countess set this difficulty at rest by showing a permission for herself and her daughter to visit the count; they had not used it, so that it was still available. They would come as evening was closing in, and, when they left, would take advantage of the darkness to slip into the jailer’s lodge instead of going out.

“The duke himself would pay the man, for the carriage would contain one hundred thousand ducats.

“The jailer was acting in good faith. Before he left the countess he received his five thousand ducats, and pointed out the place where the carriage should wait, under the care of one of her most trustworthy servants.

“The escape was fixed for the day after to-morrow.

“But I ask your pardon, monseigneur,” said Odoardo, interrupting himself. “I forget that I am speaking to a stranger, for whom these details can have no interest.”

“On the contrary, monsieur, they have the deepest interest for me, and I beg you to continue.”

Maraviglia continued:

“The two days passed in the terrible anxiety which always precedes such an event. The countess was consoled by reflecting on the deep interest the

jailer had in the success of the escape. A hundred years of fidelity would not bring him as much as this half hour of treason.

"The hours seemed as if they would never pass, the days seemed endless, and over and over again the countess regretted not having fixed it for the following day instead of the day after.

"The time when she was to go to the prison came at last. Everything necessary for the flight was placed in the carriage, so that it might not be obliged to stop on the road. Relays were ready at Pavia. At eleven o'clock the horses would be harnessed, and at midnight it would be at its station.

"Once out of danger, the fugitive would send word to his wife, who would join him wherever he was.

"The hour struck, and the countess's heart beat fast as she took her little daughter by the hand and went toward the prison.

"On the way a fear struck her that as the order was a week old they would refuse to admit her.

"She was delighted to find that she was introduced into her husband's cell without any difficulty.

"The count's situation had not been exaggerated; there was little doubt of the fate to which he was destined, for the ambassador of Francis the First was manacled like a common felon. The interview would have been sad indeed, were it not to be followed by instant flight.

"During the conversation, all that had not been arranged was finally settled. The count was determined to risk all upon the chance; he knew that he

had no mercy to expect where he was, for the emperor had made his death a *sine quâ non*."

Emmanuel Philibert started.

"Are you certain of what you say?" asked he. "You are making a terrible accusation against the greatest monarch in the universe!"

"Does your highness wish me to continue or to stop?" asked the prisoner, quietly.

"Continue. But why not answer my question?"

"Because my story will render that answer unnecessary."

"Then let me hear it," answered Emmanuel Philibert.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT TOOK PLACE IN THE FORTRESS OF MILAN ON THE NIGHT OF THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER, 1534.

"A FEW minutes before nine," continued Odoardo, "the jailer came to inform the countess that it was time to retire. The sentinel was about to be relieved, and it was best that the man who had seen her enter should see her leave. The separation was painful, but in three hours more they would meet again, and soon they would meet to part no more. The child cried piteously on leaving her father, and had to be removed by force. They passed before the sentinel, and then jailer, wife and child were lost in

the obscurity of the court-yard, from whence they cautiously gained the lodge without being observed. Once there, the jailer shut his guests in an inner room, enjoining them to preserve the most perfect silence.

“The three hours passed slowly and wearily away. At last the jailer returned.

“Follow!” said he, so softly that the countess understood rather by the expression of his face than by the sound.

“The mother would not leave her child; she wished that her husband might have the opportunity of kissing her as he left; and, moreover, there are moments when we can not separate ourselves from those we love.

“The jailer drew back the bed, and showed an opening of some two feet square.

“The jailer entered the first cell, followed by the countess and her daughter, and then drew the bed after him; he then opened the door and entered the count’s cell. The count had had a file for the previous hour, but being unskilful at the work, and fearing to alarm the sentinel, he had only got half through the link of his chain. The jailer now took the file to complete the work, while the count was bidding adieu to his wife and child. Suddenly he stopped, with one hand resting on the file and the other stretched toward the door.

“The count was about to speak.

“‘Silence!’ said the jailer; ‘something unusual is going on in the fortress.’

“ ‘ Good heavens ! what ? ’ asked the terrified countess.

“ ‘ Silence ! ’ repeated the man.

“ Everybody listened, silent and motionless, as if they had been suddenly frozen into stone. A noise of feet was heard approaching, and the regular tramp betokened that some of the persons at least were soldiers.

“ ‘ Come,’ said the jailer, seizing the countess by the arm, ‘ come ; it must be some nocturnal round of inspection by the governor, and you must not be found here. They will not stay long if they come here, and when they are gone we can resume our work.

“ The countess and her daughter did not resist ; it would have been foolish to do so, and the count himself pushed them to the door. They went out, and the jailer closed and locked the door behind them. Your highness will remember my saying that there was a barred opening from the first into the second cell ; thanks to the darkness, the countess could look through this without being seen.

“ The mother held her child in her arms, and they pressed their faces against the bars to see what was about to happen.

“ Their hopes that the visitors would not enter the count’s cell were soon destroyed ; they heard the footsteps stop at the door which led from the cell into the passage, then the grating of a key in the lock ; the door opened, and the countess was on the point of shrieking at the spectacle which presented itself. The jailer saw what was coming.

“ ‘Not a word, not a cry, not a movement, whatever happens,’ said he, ‘or I—’

“ He stopped for an instant, as if to find a menace which would effectually silence her.

“ ‘Or I will kill your child,’ said he, drawing a long pointed knife from his breast.

“ ‘Villain!’ murmured she.

“ ‘Oh,’ answered the man, ‘every one for his own life; that of a poor jailer is as valuable in his eyes as a noble countess’s is in hers.’

“ The lady placed her hand over the child’s mouth to insure silence. As to herself, there was no chance of her uttering a sound after the jailer’s threat.”

“ But what was the sight which had so nearly caused the countess to betray herself? ”

“ Firstly, two men clothed in black and bearing torches; next, a man bearing a parchment roll with a great red seal; then a man masked, and wearing a long brown cloak which hid his whole figure; after him a priest. They entered the cell one by one, and exposed to the eyes of the terrified countess another and even more sinister group remaining in the corridor. Opposite the door a man in a parti-colored dress of red and black was leaning on a long, straight, two-handed sword without any sheath; behind him stood six Brothers of Mercy in black masks, supporting an empty coffin, and behind them again shone the muskets of a dozen soldiers.

“ The count was leaning against the dark wall of his cell, and his pale face seemed to stand out from it like that of a phantom, while his eager glances,

directed toward the grating, crossed those whose loved presence he divined though he could not see.

"If there remained any doubt in his mind of the fate to which he was condemned, that doubt was of short endurance. The man holding the parchment scroll advanced, saying:

"'Count, do you believe that you are at peace with your God?'

"'As much so as a man who has nothing to reproach himself with can be.'

"'That is well, for I come to read you your condemnation to death.'

"'Pronounced by what tribunal?' asked the count, scornfully.

"'By the all-powerful justice of the duke.'

"'On whose accusation?'

"'On that of the most august emperor, Charles the Fifth.'

"'Well, I am ready to hear the sentence.'

"'On your knees. It is kneeling that a sentence of death should be heard.'

"'Yes, when the listener is guilty, not when he is innocent.'

"'Count, you are not above the law; on your knees, or we must use force.'

"'Try,' said the count.

"'Let him stand,' said the masked individual. 'Only let him cross himself.'

"The count started at the sound of the voice.

"'Duke Sforza,' said he, turning to the speaker, 'I thank you.'

“ ‘Oh, if it is the duke, let me implore mercy,’ murmured the countess.

“ ‘Silence, if you value your child’s life.’

“The countess involuntarily gave a sob, which was heard by the count; he ventured in answer to make a gesture with his hand, which meant courage, then following the duke’s recommendation:

“ ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ said he, crossing himself.

“ ‘Amen,’ murmured the priest.

“Then the man with the parchment commenced reading the sentence. It was drawn up in the name of the Duke Francesco Maria Sforza, at the request of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and it condemned Francesco Maraviglia to be executed in his cell at midnight, as a traitor, a spy, and a divulger of state secrets.

“A second sob reached the ear of the count, but his only. He turned his eyes in the direction of the grating:

“ ‘Incomprehensible as the sentence is,’ said he, ‘I submit to it without grief and without anger. Yet, as a man who can no longer defend his life, must still defend his honor, I appeal from the sentence of the duke.’

“ ‘And to whom?’ asked Sforza.

“ ‘Firstly, to my royal master, Francis the First, and secondly, to the future and to God—to God, who judges all men, and particularly princes, kings, and emperors.’

“ ‘ Is that the only tribunal to which you appeal ? ’ asked the duke.

“ ‘ Yes ; and I summon you to appear before it.’

“ ‘ When ? ’ asked the duke.

“ ‘ In the same time that Jacques de Molay assigned to his judge—that is, in a year and a day. This is the 15th of November, 1534, and I summon you to appear before the tribunal of the Almighty on the 16th of November, 1535.’

“ As he said this, the count stretched out his hand toward the duke with an action of such solemnity and conviction, of such majesty and command, that the duke’s face turned white with terror behind his sable mask. For an instant it was the victim who triumphed and the judge who stood in awe.

“ ‘ Bah ! ’ exclaimed the duke, at last, ‘ you have a quarter of an hour to pass with your confessor before your execution.’

“ Then, turning to the priest :

“ ‘ My father,’ said he, ‘ do your office.’

“ And he left the cell, followed by the torch-bearers and the man with the parchment ; but they left the door wide open behind them, so that they might be able to see everything that took place within the cell, although they had withdrawn out of respect for the confession.

“ A last faint sob reached the count’s ear through the grating ; the unhappy countess had calculated upon the closing of the door as her last gleam of hope ; she would have thrown herself at the feet of the confessor and besought him with tears and prayers, the

prayers of a wife who begs her husband's life, to assist in the escape of the count. My poor mother's last hope had failed her."

Emmanuel Philibert trembled; he had forgotten that the relator of this fearful scene was no indifferent historian, but a son, describing the death of his father.

"When my father was left alone with the confessor," continued Odoardo, "he addressed him in words which were in reality addressed to his wife, although they seemed intended for the ear of the priest alone.

"My sister alone, if she still lives, can tell the agony of my poor mother during this awful scene, where the dark figure of the executioner, leaning on his sword, motionless and pitiless, formed so ghastly a background. Alas! at that moment I was three hundred leagues distant, laughing and playing with all the thoughtless gayety of a boy. The duke had been standing with his watch in his hand during the whole confession. Exactly as the fifteen minutes finished:

"'Count,' said he, 'the time you were allowed is over; the priest has finished his task; the executioner must do his.'

"The confessor gave the count absolution and retired, exhibiting the cross. As he withdrew, the executioner advanced. The count was still kneeling.

"'Have you any last request to address to the duke or the emperor?' asked Sforza.

"'I make no petition, except to my Maker,' answered the count.

“ ‘Then you are ready?’

“ ‘You see I am on my knees.’

“The count was indeed kneeling, with his face turned toward the grating, and his eyes bidding his wife and child that last adieu which his mouth dared not utter.

“ ‘If you do not wish my hand to sully you, be good enough to turn down the collar of your shirt, count,’ said the executioner. ‘I have no right to touch you except with the edge of my sword.’

The count turned down his collar without speaking.

“ ‘Recommend yourself to God,’ said the executioner.

“ ‘Almighty and most merciful Father, into Thy hands I commit my soul.’

“As the last words were uttered, the torch-light flashed upon the gleaming sword-blade as it whistled through the air, and the floor echoed to the heavy fall of the lifeless corpse, whose head rolled slowly forward and struck the bottom of the grated door, as if by a last impulse of love.

“My poor mother’s stifled cry was thought to be the death-rattle of the murdered man.

“I ask your pardon, monseigneur, but if you wish me to finish the history, you must give me some water, or I shall faint,” said Odoardo, hoarsely.

Emmanuel, seeing his prisoner tremble and turn pale, sprang to support him, made him sit down on a pile of cushions, and presented him with the glass of water with his own hand, and while he did so, his face, which showed no emotion during battle or

danger, was almost as pale as that of the man he was assisting.

After five minutes, Odoardo was able to continue his story.

“When my mother recovered her consciousness, the whole scene appeared to have passed like some fearful dream, which she would have disbelieved had she not been lying on the bed in the jailer’s lodge. So solemn had been the injunctions which she had given my little sister not to speak or cry, that, although the poor child believed she had lost both father and mother, the countess found her staring anxiously but silently in the face of the one parent she could still see, while her eyes were flooded with unrestrainable tears. The jailer was gone, but his wife had supplied his place, and she, pitying my poor mother, made her put on one of her own dresses, while she disguised my sister in the clothes of her own son. At daybreak she conducted them to the road to Novare, gave the countess two ducats, and said adieu, telling her to trust in God.

“My mother seemed pursued and maddened by a terrible vision; she neither returned to her palace for money, nor sought the carriage in which the count was to have escaped; her sole idea was to fly—to reach the frontier, to rush from the cursed and blood-stained territory of the Sforza. She disappeared in the direction of Novare, and has never been heard of since. What may have been the fate of my mother and sister is known to God, but not to me.

“The news of my father’s death soon found its way to Paris. It was the king himself who informed me of it, and as he did so, he assured me of his constant protection, and announced to me his intention of declaring war to avenge my father’s murder.

“I sought and obtained permission to follow the king. At first fortune favored us. We crossed your father’s country, which Francis took possession of; then we arrived at Milan.

“The Duke of Sforza had fled to Rome for the protection of Paul the Third.

“Every search was made for information regarding the death of my father, but it was impossible to find any of those who had been present at the murder. The executioner had died suddenly three days after the deed; the name of the officer who had read the sentence was unknown; so was that of the confessor. The jailer and his wife had fled.

“Thus, in spite of all my endeavors, I could not even discover the resting-place of my father’s body. Twenty years had passed since these fruitless efforts, when I received a letter dated Avignon.

“A man, who only signed by initial, entreated me to come immediately to Avignon, as he had most important information to give me regarding my father’s death.

“What this letter offered me was the desire of my life. I set off instantly for Avignon. I found the man—he was the ex-jailer of the fortress of Milan. On seeing the death of my father, and knowing exactly where the carriage would be waiting, the evil

spirit had tempted him; he had left my mother in charge of his wife, slipped down the rope ladder, found the carriage, gone up to the coachman in the name of my father, stabbed him, thrown his body into the moat, seized the reins, and escaped over the frontier with the carriage and its contents.

“Once over the frontier, he had sold the carriage and gone to Avignon, and from thence had written to his wife and child to join him.

“The hand of God, however, was upon this man; his wife died first—then his child; at last he felt that he himself would soon be called to his account. It was then that he sent for me.

“The man related to me, detail by detail, every occurrence of that terrible night, which made so profound an impression upon his mind that he had not forgotten a single particular; but alas! he could give me no information regarding the fate of my poor mother and sister, who doubtless died of hunger and fatigue on the road to Navarre.

“I pardoned the dying wretch for the robbery he had committed, but there my forgiveness stopped. The Duke Sforza had died in 1535, exactly a year and a day after my father had summoned him to appear before the throne of God. He had gone to his account before a higher tribunal than that of human justice, and to suffer a vengeance more terrible than that of man.

“There remained the emperor, Charles the Fifth—the emperor at the very summit of power and glory, in all the magnificence and plenitude of royalty; he

was unpunished and unchastened, and upon him I was determined to avenge myself.

“And now, monseigneur, I have told you all the truth. I have tried to avenge my father’s death by taking the life of the emperor, and I am prepared to lose my own; but I am a gentleman, and I claim a gentleman’s death.”

Emmanuel Philibert inclined his head in sign of assent.

“Your request shall be granted,” said he. “Do you wish to remain unbound until the time of your execution?”

“On what condition will that be granted me?”

“On your word not to attempt to escape.”

“I have already given it.”

“Repeat it.”

“I repeat it; but be speedy. The crime is public, the confession is complete. Let the punishment be without delay.”

“It is not for me to fix the time of a man’s death,” answered Emmanuel; “that rests with the emperor.”

Then calling the sergeant—

“Take this gentleman to a tent; let him be alone. A single sentinel will be sufficient. I have his word as a gentleman,” said he.

Emmanuel followed the retreating figure with his eyes until it was out of sight; then, fancying he heard a slight noise, he turned, and saw Leona standing silently at the entrance of the inner compartment, her eyes still wet with the tears which she had doubt-

less shed over the melancholy story which she had just heard.

"What do you want, dear?" asked the prince.

"I want to tell you," answered Leona, "that that young man must not die."

Emmanuel's face grew sad.

"Do you reflect upon what you are asking, Leona? That man has committed, or tried to commit, a most fearful crime."

"Still," cried the young girl, throwing her arms round Emmanuel's neck, "still, I tell you, he must not die."

"The emperor must decide, dearest, what I must do; and, indeed, all I can do is to report what I have heard to the emperor."

"And I tell you that if the emperor sentences him to death you must obtain his pardon."

"Leona, you give me credit for more influence over the emperor than I have. The imperial justice must take its course: if it condemn—"

"Whether it condemn or not, Odoardo Maraviglia must live. He must, my dear love, he must!"

"And why, Leona?"

"Because he is my brother!"

Emmanuel Philibert started back with a cry of surprise. The mother dying of hunger and fatigue on the banks of the Sesia, the child who so obstinately guarded the secret of its birth and sex—all, all was explained by those few words—"He is my brother."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEMON OF THE SOUTH.

WHILE the scene related in the last chapter was taking place, the huzzas of the soldiers and the joyous flourishes of the brazen trumpets were announcing an event which was putting the whole camp in commotion.

A small body of horsemen had been descried approaching from the direction of Brussels, and the scouts who had been sent out to inspect them returned at full gallop, with the news that the leader of the troop was none other than the emperor's only son, Philip, Prince of Spain, King of Naples, and husband of the Queen of England.

The noise of the trumpets drew everybody out of the tents to inspect the new-comer.

Philip, who was then about twenty-eight, rode his beautiful white horse with grace and skill, was dressed in a violet cloak and a black velvet tunic—that is to say, in regal mourning; and, with the exception of his buff leather boots, which reached high up the leg, the whole of his costume, including even the black velvet cap with its sable plume, was as black as night, and he wore the necklace of the order of the *toison d'or*.

The emperor, who had been passionately attached to Philip's mother, would also have loved the son,

but the warmth of his father's heart failed to melt the wall of ice which seemed to envelop that of the Prince of Spain, and the generous impulses of Charles were nipped and blighted by coldness and formality.

Charles had been one of the first informed of the unlooked-for advent of his son, and was not a little relieved to find that his son had no reason to conceal his presence in Flanders from him. He took the arm of one of his officers and dragged himself painfully to the door of the tent to meet the prince, who was advancing amid braying trumpets, beating drums, and shouting soldiery, as if he already were lord and sovereign.

"Well, well!" muttered the emperor, "God's will be done!"

As soon as Philip saw his father, he stopped his horse, dismounted, and advanced slowly and respectfully to kneel before him.

This humility chased away the last suspicion from the mind of the emperor; he raised and embraced his son, and then, turning to his companions:

"I thank you, gentlemen," said he, "that, knowing the joy which my son's arrival would cause me, you announced it to me by your shouts and huzzas.

"Come, Philip," continued he, "it is five years since we have met, and we must each of us have much to say to the other."

And bowing to the crowd of officers and nobles, he retired once more into the tent, leaning on the arm of his son, and followed by cries of "Long live

the King of England!" "Long live the Emperor of Germany!" "Long live Don Philip!" "Long live Charles the Fifth!"

As Charles had said, they had many and weighty matters for each other's ears, and yet there was a minute's silence. Philip respectfully declined to sit down beside his father on the couch, took a chair opposite, and waited for the emperor to commence the conversation.

"My son," said Charles, "nothing less than your arrival could have dispelled the gloom which the news I have this day received has produced upon me."

"The saddest part of the news is already known to me, as indeed my being in mourning shows," answered Philip. "You have had the misfortune to lose a mother, and I a grandmother."

"Ah! they told you of this in Belgium?"

Philip bowed. "In England, sire; we have direct communication with Spain by water, while your majesty's courier would have been obliged to come round by Genes, which must have detained him."

"Ah!" said Charles, "it would be so; but besides this, I have another subject of uneasiness."

"Your majesty doubtless speaks of the election of Paul the Fourth, and of the treaty between him and the King of France, which is to be signed to-day."

Charles looked at the prince in astonishment. "My son," said he, "has an English vessel brought you this news also? it is far from Civita Vecchia to Portsmouth!"

"No, sire, I learned it through France. I heard it before your majesty, because it came straight from Ostia to Marseilles, and thence to Boulogne and London, while your messenger had to cross the Alps, which are still blocked up with snow."

Charles frowned; he had long considered it his right to know every event before the whole world, and here was his son, who had not only heard of the death of the queen-mother before him, but actually informed him of this alliance between France and the pope, which he knew nothing about.

Philip did not appear to notice his father's astonishment.

"Caraffa's measures had been so well considered that he was enabled to send the treaty to the King of France during the conclave, and doubtless this is what has emboldened Henry the Second, after taking Marienburg, to march upon Bouvines and Dinant, with the intention, doubtless, of cutting off your retreat."

"What!" exclaimed Charles, "is he as far advanced as that? and am I to be caught in a trap as I was at Innspruck?"

"I hope not; for your majesty will not refuse to conclude a truce with Henry of France."

"By Heaven!" exclaimed Charles, "I should be mad if I were to refuse, and even if I were not to propose it."

"Sire," answered Philip; "your majesty's proposing this truce would render Henry too supercilious, and therefore Queen Mary and I have thought

of putting ourselves forward in the interest of your dignity."

"And you come to ask my permission to act? Good, do not lose time; send the most skillful ambassadors you have to France—they can not arrive too soon."

"It was that reflection that induced us to dispatch the Cardinal Polus to Henry to demand a truce, of course subject to your majesty's approval."

Charles the Fifth shook his head.

"He will arrive too late," murmured he; "Henry will be at Brussels before the cardinal is at Calais."

"Therefore the cardinal has come by way of Ostend, and has joined the King of France at Dinant."

"Skillful as he is," said Charles, with a sigh, "I doubt his succeeding in such a negotiation as this."

"Then it gives me the greatest pleasure to be able to announce to your majesty that he has been successful. The King of France accepts an armistice, if not a truce. The monastery at Vocells, near Cambray, has been selected for the conferences; and the cardinal, when he announced his success to me at Brussels, said he thought it would be best not to raise objections on this score."

Charles stared in mute astonishment at the young man, who came in this quiet and unostentatious manner to announce the happy conclusion of a matter which the emperor himself had looked upon as an impossibility.

"And what is to be the duration of this truce?"

"The real or the nominal duration?"

"The nominal."

"Five years, sire."

"And the real?"

"What it pleases God."

"And how long do you fancy it will please God that it shall last?"

"Why," answered the King of England and Naples, with a scarcely perceptible smile, "just long enough for your majesty to levy a re-enforcement of ten thousand Spaniards, and for me to send ten thousand English to your assistance."

"My son," said Charles, "this truce was my greatest wish at present, and as you have obtained it, I promise that you shall break it or not at your own pleasure."

"I do not understand your majesty," said Philip, whose command over himself could not prevent a glance of hope and ambition from flashing from his eyes. He saw that the scepters of Spain and the Netherlands were almost within his grasp, and that perhaps even the imperial crown might be his also.

A week later the truce was signed in the following terms:

"There shall be five years' truce, both by sea and land, between the subjects, states, kingdoms, and principalities of the emperor, and of the King of France, and of King Philip.

"There shall be an entire suspension of hostilities, but each party shall retain the places they have gained in the present war.

“His Holiness the Pope, Paul the Fourth, is included in this truce.”

Philip presented the treaty with his own hand to his father, who looked almost with terror at the passionless face of the prince.

The treaty lacked only the signature of Charles the Fifth.

Charles the Fifth signed.

Then, when he had signed his name with infinite pain:

“Sire,” said he, using this title to his son for the first time, “return to London, and hold yourself in readiness to return to Brussels at my request.”

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLES KEEPS HIS PROMISE.

ON Wednesday, the 25th of October, 1555, the streets of Brussels were thronged, not only with the inhabitants of Brabant itself, but also with people from every state which owned the sway of Charles the Fifth.

A great assembly, the object of which was still unknown, had been summoned by the emperor, and, after being once postponed, was to be held that day.

The interior of the great hall of the old palace had been gorgeously decorated, and at one end had been erected a sort of stage with an ascent of four

or five steps, and covered with the richest fabric, and supporting three seats overshadowed by a dais bearing the imperial arms. These seats were evidently destined for the Emperor Philip, who had arrived at Brussels the evening before, and the emperor's sister Mary, Queen Dowager of Hungary.

The space, which extended from this stage in the form of a horseshoe, was filled with seats.

Philip, Mary of Hungary, Queen Elinor, the widow of Francis the First, Maximilian of Bohemia, and Christine, Duchess of Lorraine, were installed in the palace, but Charles the Fifth still inhabited what he called his little house in the park.

At four o'clock the emperor set out for the palace mounted upon an easy and gentle mule, which was the only mode of transit he could bear, and followed by a long train of princes and nobles on foot. He was now such a martyr to the gout, that, even supported on each side, it was with the greatest pain and difficulty that he managed to walk even the small distance from the door to the throne.

He was clad in the imperial vest of cloth of gold, and wore the necklace of the *toison d'or* and the imperial crown, but the scepter, which his hand could no longer hold, was borne before him on a red velvet cushion.

Those who were to occupy the seats and benches were now introduced; on the right sat the knights of the *toison d'or*, on the left the princes and nobles of Spain, and behind them the privy counselors, the counselors of state, and the counselors of finance. In

the middle were the states of Brabant, Flanders, and the rest of the Pays-Bas.

The galleries had been crammed with spectators from an early hour in the morning.

The emperor entered, leaning on the shoulder of William of Orange, who was afterward so noted by the name of William the Silent; next to William of Orange came Emmanuel Philibert with his squire and page.

On the opposite side, in advance of all the kings and princes, walked a man of from thirty to thirty-five, whom none of them knew, and who seemed quite as much astonished to see himself there as they were to see him.

It was Odoardo Maraviglia, who had been brought out of his prison, presented with a magnificent court dress, and led to this station without informing him where he was going.

As the emperor entered, every one rose; he walked slowly and painfully toward the throne; and it could easily be seen that it required all the courage he was master of to control the cry of agony which rose to his lips at every step.

On reaching the throne Charles sat down, placing Don Philip on his right and Queen Mary on his left, and signed to the counselor, Philibert Brussellius, to read the proclamation.

All faces except that of the prince expressed intense curiosity and excitement; his pale visage alone seemed cold and unmoved; his eyes alone seemed indifferent to what was taking place.

The oration shortly proclaimed that the assembled kings, princes, nobles, knights of the *toison d'or*, and members of the Flemish assembly, had been convoked to hear the abdication of the Emperor Charles the Fifth in favor of his son, Don Philip, who would now succeed to all the titles of King of Castile, Leon, Grenada, Navarre, Aragon, Naples, Sicily and Majorca, of the Isles and Indies of the Atlantic and Pacific; Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, of Lothier, of Brabant, of Luisbourg, of Luxembourg and Quelieres; Count of Flanders, Artois, Burgundy, Hainault, Zealand, Holland, Hagaenau, Namur and Zutphen; Prince of Zwane, and Marquis of the Holy Empire, Lord of Frise, Salmi, Malines, Utrecht, Overysse and Groeningen.

The imperial crown was reserved for Ferdinand of Rome.

This reservation was the only thing which produced the slightest effect upon the passionless countenance of the prince.

This abdication, which fell like a thunderbolt upon the whole civilized world, was attributed by the orator to the emperor's daily increasing longing to return to Spain, and to his sufferings from the gout, which were aggravated by the climate of the Netherlands; and the speech was finished by an appeal to the states of Flanders to concur cheerily in the cession of authority by Charles in favor of his son.

The most profound silence reigned through the hall. It was indeed a sight to awe all minds and soften all hearts, to see this mighty potentate, this

god of victory and power, after forty years of glory and supremacy, descend voluntarily from that throne, from which all the efforts of Francis, Solyman, and Luther had been powerless to dislodge him, and proclaim aloud the vanity of human strength.

But a still more extraordinary spectacle was to follow—that of a man publicly acknowledging a fault, and asking pardon of him whom he had injured.

The emperor gathered all his strength for the effort.

“My friends,” said he, “I have promised myself to make reparation to a man whom I have injured.”

Then, turning to the stranger, whose magnificent costume everybody had remarked:

“Odoardo Maraviglia,” said he, in a firm voice, “come hither.”

The young man to whom this formal speech was addressed turned pale, and approached with a doubtful and uncertain step.

“Count,” said the emperor, “whether voluntarily or involuntarily, it matters not, I have grievously injured you in the person of your father, who suffered a cruel and secret death in the dungeons of Milan. That deed has often presented itself to my mind, shaded by the shroud of remorse. Count Maraviglia, before all present, under the eyes of God and man, from the moment of throwing off the imperial robe which I have worn for six-and-thirty years, I humiliate myself before you, and entreat you not only to pardon me, but also to intercede for me with

God, who will perhaps accord more to the supplication of the victim than of the murderer."

Odoardo Maraviglia fell on his knees, with a cry of astonishment.

"Most noble emperor," said he, "it is not without reason that the world calls you the August. Yes, I pardon you, both in my father's name and my own. But I, of whom shall I ask a pardon which I dare not grant to myself?"

Then rising:

"Gentlemen," said he, turning to the assembly, "gentleman, you see in me a man who has tried to assassinate the emperor, and he not only pardons me, but also asks pardon from me. King Philip," added he, turning to him who was henceforward to be called Philip the Second, "the murderer places himself in your hands."

"My son," said Charles, whose strength was failing once more, "I recommend this man to you; let his life be sacred!"

"Ah! my dear Emmanuel," said the Duke of Savoy's page, gliding to his side, "how kind, and how great you are! I see your influence in all this."

Then Charles seated Philip on the throne, and placed the crown on his head with his own hands, saying:

"May Heaven grant that this crown be not a crown of thorns for thine elected."

Charles then made a step in the direction of the door.

Don Philip, the Prince of Orange, Emmanuel

Philibert, and many others rushed forward to support the ex-emperor, but he motioned them back, and beckoned Maraviglia to his side.

Thus he left the assembly, amid cries and acclamations; a mighty monarch retiring from the world, an humble Christian reconciling himself with his God, a repentant sinner tottering to the tomb, supported by the son of the man whom he had caused to be foully murdered twenty years before, in the blood-stained fortress of Milan.

On arriving at the door, he dismissed the young man, and, mounting the mule upon which he had come to the assembly, he rode away, accompanied only by a single groom, and no one who had seen the humble pilgrim riding slowly on his way could have fancied that it was the mighty emperor whose abdication was filling Brussels with astonishment and alarm, and was to ring on the swift wings of rumor from one end of the world to the other.

On arriving at the park, Charles found the gate open, and rode straight in. The door was open, like the gate, and he entered leaning upon the shoulder of the groom.

Seating himself on a couch by the fire, he allowed his memory to wander back over his past life, the history of half a century—and what a half century! The age of Henry the Eighth, Maximilian, Clement the Seventh, Francis the First, Solyman, and Luther! He passed in review the events of his reign, as a traveler in the decline of life remounts the verdant and flowery paths which he descended in his youth.

The voyage was long, glorious and marvelous, and led him past crowds of courtiers who worshiped his very footsteps, through the accumulations of the world, and over kneeling nations and conquered lands.

Suddenly this glorious dream was disturbed by the homely incident of a coal flying out of the fire and falling upon the carpet, which immediately began to smolder and smoke.

"Here!" cried he; "quick! somebody here! Who is in waiting?"

No answer.

"Is not anybody there? Make haste, some of you!" cried Charles, impatiently.

Still no answer; every one, from the prince to the attendants, had gone to salute the new king.

"Ah!" murmured the ex-emperor, dragging himself painfully toward the cinder, "am I alone and abandoned already? By Heaven, if Providence wishes me to repent what I have done, it does not delay its lessons."

As Charles was crushing the last sparks with his foot, the form of a man appeared in the door-way.

"At last!" murmured the emperor.

"Sire," said the new-comer, seeing that Charles had mistaken him, "you will excuse my presenting myself thus, but, finding all the doors open, and nobody to announce me, I am forced to take the liberty of announcing myself."

"Then announce yourself by all means," answered Charles, "for I do not know you."

"Sire," answered the stranger, in a voice of mingled respect and pity, "I am Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France, and envoy extraordinary of his Majesty King Henry the Second."

"Then the envoy extraordinary of his Majesty King Henry the Second has come to the wrong door," answered Charles, bitterly; "he should have addressed himself to my successor, Philip the Second, who has been King of Naples for nine months and King of Spain for twenty minutes."

"Sire," said Coligny, in the same respectful voice, "whatever changes may have taken place in the fortunes of King Philip the Second, either nine months or twenty minutes since, yet to me you are still the sovereign elect of Germany, the most mighty, most holy, and most august emperor, Charles the Fifth; and as it is to your majesty that my king's letter is addressed, allow me to deliver it to you."

"In that case, my dear admiral, will you assist me to light the candles, for it seems that the accession of my son to the throne has deprived me of everything, even to my last lackey."

And the emperor, with the admiral's assistance, set about lighting the candles in order to read Henry's letter, and moreover Charles was impatient to see the man whom he had found so formidable an adversary for the last three years.

At this time Gaspard de Coligny was a man about thirty-eight years of age, with a martial face, brilliant and sparkling eye, a tall and well-set figure, and a daring and faithful heart. He had been as great

a favorite with Francis the First as he was with Henry the Second, and was destined to be with Francis the Second.

The emperor looked at his visitor with manifest admiration, for it was difficult to conceive a man bearing more perfectly the appearance of a soldier and a general.

Still, as Charles looked at the admiral, he understood, with one of those rapid flashes of instinct which seldom failed him, that Coligny had been sent to Brussels, not so much to deliver him the letter as to see what took place on this eventful 25th of October; thus the first question he addressed to him was:

"And when did you arrive, admiral?"

"Only this morning, sire," answered Coligny.

"And you have brought me—?"

"This letter from his Majesty King Henry the Second."

The emperor took the letter, but after several useless efforts, found himself unable to break the seal, to such an extent had the gout stiffened his fingers. Coligny offered to assist him.

"By my troth," exclaimed the emperor, "I should make a fine knight to break a lance, when I can not even break a seal."

Coligny broke the seal, and was about to return the letter, but Charles stopped him.

"No, no," said he; "the eye is almost as weak as the hand. Ah, you will admit that I have done well

in resigning my power and authority to a younger and stronger man."

The admiral commenced reading the message without answering, and while he was thus employed, Charles, who seemed to see nothing, was really watching him with the eye of an eagle.

The letter from Henry simply stated that he now sent the agreement for the truce in due form, that before sent having been only a draft. Coligny then drew the document, sealed with the great seal of France, from his breast, and presented it to Charles. The counterpart, bearing the seals of Spain, Germany, and England, had been sent to France long before.

The emperor glanced over the formal terms of the contract, as if he divined that a year would not pass before they would all be broken and flung to the four winds of heaven; then, laying down the parchment, and leaning on Coligny's arm to regain his seat:

"It is a strange freak of fortune," said he, "that to-day, when I am powerless and alone, I should be supported by the arm which nearly hurled me down from the pinnacle of my sovereignty and glory."

"Oh, sire," said Coligny, "no one could bring down Charles the Fifth but himself; and if it was the lot of pygmies like myself to strive against the giant, the struggle only served to show our weakness and his strength."

This compliment, coming from a man like Coligny, was evidently anything but displeasing to Charles;

still he exclaimed, as he motioned his visitor to be seated :

"Enough of this, admiral; I am no longer either emperor, king, or prince, and I must learn to live without flattery. How is my brother Henry?"

"Well, sire, by Heaven's blessing," answered Coligny.

"Ah! I am heartily glad to hear it; and not without reason. You know that, by the mother's side, I am allied to the king who wears the noblest crown in the world. By the bye," continued he, affecting to bring back the conversation to ordinary topics, "I hear that he is getting gray. Is it true? Why, it seems only yesterday that he was in Spain, a mere boy with a smooth chin, and yet twenty years have flown by since then—twenty long years!"

And Charles sighed, as if these words brought back all the unforgotten glories of the past.

"Indeed, sire," answered Coligny, "his majesty does begin to show two or three gray hairs, but what man of his age, or indeed even younger, does not?"

"Wait, wait, my dear admiral; let me think; I know I have a kind of cabalistic message to send to my brother Henry. Ah! I remember. Is there not a young man called Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, at your court?"

"Yes; a great favorite of the king. He is captain of the Scotch Guard."

"A great favorite, is he?" said Charles, thoughtfully.

“Has your majesty anything to say against him?” asked the admiral.

“No,” said the emperor; “but listen to a story I have to tell you. When I was crossing France, with the permission of my brother Francis, for the purpose of suppressing the revolt of my dear subjects of Ghent, I had with me a sort of astrologer, who was said to be able to tell by the first glance at a man’s face whether he meditated any attempt upon the life or liberty of those who trusted to him.

“We were on the road from Orleans to Fontainebleau, when we saw a cloud of dust coming toward us, and were rather in fear that it might be a troop of soldiers whom my dear brother Francis had sent to arrest us; but we soon saw velvet and gold shining through the mist, and that it was an escort of honor and not a hostile troop. We continued our way, and were soon met by the dauphin and his followers. He welcomed me so cordially in the name of his father that I can assure you I had not the least suspicion after that minute. While I was embracing the dauphin our companions became completely mingled, and I saw that my Italian astrologer, Angelo Policastro, had pushed his horse forward and was riding by my side. It seemed to me that this was somewhat impertinent in a man in his position.

“‘Signor Angelo,’ said I, ‘what are you doing here?’

“‘I am at my post, sire,’ answered he.

“‘I do not think so, signor. Fall back a little.’

“‘I neither will nor ought to do so, sire,’ answered he.

“I saw immediately that something was wrong, so, fearing lest he should obey my first injunction:

“‘Well, then, stay where you are, signor,’ said I, ‘only on our arrival at the chateau you will tell me what your reason was.’

“‘I will not fail, sire,’ said he. ‘But look at that young man with the long fair hair who is riding on my left.’

“‘Well, what of him?’

“‘Nothing now, sire.’

“Well, when we entered the chateau, Signor Angelo followed me.

“‘Well, and what about the young man with the fair curls?’ I asked.

“‘Did you remark, sire, the line which there is in the brow between his eyebrows?’

“‘No, by my faith,’ said I. ‘I had something better to do than to look for wrinkles in a young man’s face.’

“‘It matters not, sire. We astrologers call that line the line of death. Sire, that young man will kill a king.’

“‘A king or an emperor?’ I asked.

“‘I can not say. He will strike some head that wears a crown.’

“‘Ah! and have you no means of ascertaining whether that head is mine or not?’

“‘Yes, sire; but in order to do that, I require a lock of his hair.’

“ ‘His hair! and pray, how am I to get a lock of his hair?’

“ ‘I do not know, sire,’ answered Angelo, ‘but without it I can not tell you who he will kill.’

“I began to reflect how I might obtain the desired article, when a beautiful young girl, the daughter of the gardener, appeared with a basket of flowers. I stopped her, and dropping a couple of bright gold pieces into her hand:

“ ‘My pretty maid,’ said I, ‘do you want to gain ten more?’

“ ‘What am I to do for it, your majesty?’ asked she.

“ ‘Look,’ said I, taking her to the window and showing her the young man with the fair hair, who was walking in the garden, ‘you see that young man?’

“ ‘Yes, your majesty.’

“ ‘Well,’ said I, ‘bring me a lock of his hair to-morrow morning, and instead of two gold pieces I will give you twenty.’

“ ‘But how shall I get his hair, your majesty?’ asked she, looking at me naïvely.

“ ‘Oh, that is no business of mine,’ said I. ‘You must find a way to get it.’

“The young girl went out, smiling thoughtfully, and the next day she came back with a long, gold-colored curl and received her twenty gold pieces. Ah! admiral, the most innocent girl is more than our match in intrigue and tact.

“I gave the curl to Signor Angelo. He made his

experiments upon it, and then told me that the danger did not threaten me, but a king who bore the fleur-de-lis on his coat of arms. Well, admiral, this young man with the fair curls, who has the line of death between the eyebrows, is called Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, the captain of my dear brother Henry's Scotch Guard."

"What, your majesty suspects—"

"I!" said Charles, "I suspect nothing. Heaven forbid! I only repeat to you, word for word, a story which may be useful to my dear brother Henry, and I warn his most Christian majesty to take notice of the wrinkle between the eyes of the captain of his Scotch Guard, which Signor Angelo Policastro called the line of death, and which he said menaced a king who carried the fleur-de-lis on his arms."

"Sire," said Coligny, "your message shall be delivered to the King of France."

"Here, admiral, take this as a keepsake from an old enemy," said Charles, throwing over the ambassador's neck a magnificent gold chain, to which hung that splendid diamond star which was called the Star of the West.

Coligny would have received the present kneeling, but Charles prevented him, and as the admiral turned to go, he met Emmanuel Philibert entering to pay his respects to the emperor, who seemed to him even grander in his solitude and retirement than he had been in his glory and power.

The two captains saluted each other with the great-

est courtesy—they had seen each other on the field of battle, and knew each other's real value.

"Has your majesty any further message for the king, my master?" asked Coligny.

"No, none."

Then, looking at Emmanuel Philibert with a smile:

"Except, my dear admiral, that if the salvation of our soul left a little leisure we should occupy it by finding a husband for Mademoiselle Marguerite de France."

Then, leaning on the arm of the Duke of Savoy:

"Come, my dear Emmanuel," said he, "it seems to me an age since I saw you!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE COURT OF FRANCE.

ABOUT a year after the abdication of Charles the Fifth, as the rich July sun was flooding the fields of yellowing wheat below Saint Germain with one gorgeous stream of golden light, a brilliant troop might have been seen to issue from the old chateau and take their way toward The Park, whose great trees already began to grow ruddy and bright with the crimson and orange tints of autumn.

It was indeed a brilliant troop, for it was composed of the king, Henry the Second of France, his sister

Marguerite, the beautiful Duchess de Valentinois, the Dauphin Francis, Henry's daughter Elizabeth de Valois, the lovely and fairy-like Mary Queen of Scots, then a mere girl, and of the principal nobles and ladies of that gay and sparkling court.

On the balcony of the chateau, leaning on the richly wrought iron-work of the railings, stood the queen, Catherine de Medicis, with the two young princes, who were afterward crowned—one as Charles the Ninth, the other as Henry the Third, and who were now of the respective ages of seven and six—and lastly a little girl of five years old, whose childish grace and elegance were not unworthy of her after fame and of the halo of romance and love which played around the fair head of Marguerite de Valois and of Marguerite de Navarre. The children were too young to accompany their father in the hunting expedition for which he was bound.

Catherine de Medicis had excused herself from joining the party on the ground of being unwell; and, as she was one of those women who never do anything without an object, we may conclude that, whether she had any real indisposition or not, she had at all events a reason for being indisposed.

We have said that the king's sister, Mme. Marguerite de France, rode at his right hand, and it may not be amiss to devote a few words to her.

The Princess Marguerite de France, the most accomplished and one of the most beautiful ladies of her day, was at this time between thirty-three and thirty-four years of age.

How came it that so noble and fair a princess had remained single so long? There were two reasons—one which she announced publicly to all the world, another which she hardly dared to confess even to herself.

When she was still very young Francis the First had wished to marry her to M. de Vendome, the first prince of his blood, but the haughty girl had replied that she would never marry a man who would one day be the subject of her brother.

This was her avowed reason for remaining unmarried. But what was that secret reason, which was most likely to be the true one?

During the conferences of Nice between Pope Paul the Third and Francis, the Queen of Navarre went to visit M. de Savoie at the chateau, and took Mme. Marguerite with her. The old duke was infinitely pleased with the young princess, and proposed a marriage between her and Emmanuel Philibert. The two young people were introduced to each other, but Emmanuel, who was entirely engrossed with his exercises, his love for Leona and his friendship of Scianca-Ferro, had scarcely noticed the princess; but it had not been the same with her. The image of the young prince had taken firm hold of her heart, and when the negotiations had been broken off, and war once more declared between France and Savoy, she had been stricken with a girl's despair, which nobody paid any attention to, but which she cherished in her heart and nourished with her tears until it settled down into a gentle melancholy which

was mingled with the vague hope which never abandons a true and loving mind.

Twenty years had rolled by since that interview. The fair plains of Saint Germain had been gilded with the suns of twenty summers and whitened by the snows of twenty winters, and the princess had found some pretext for refusing every offer, however advantageous.

While waiting till chance or Providence should favor her secret desires, the Princess Marguerite had grown both in height and years and become a lovely and charming woman, full of grace, kindness and pity. Her fair, golden hair fell in shining masses on her snowy shoulders, and her bright, hazel eyes contrasted strangely with her fair hair, while her strongly marked nose and full lip showed endurance and determination.

At the king's left hand rode his mistress, Diane de Poitiers, Comtesse de Breze, who, in spite of her five-and-fifty years, had a skin as fair and fresh and hair as rich and black as a girl's; and rumor said that the Constable de Montmorency was by no means insensible to her charms.

Behind the king rode the Dauphin Francis, and between his affianced bride, Mary Stuart and Mme. Elizabeth de France.

The dauphin, who was fourteen years of age, was a delicate and sickly boy, with light brown hair and eyes which were expressionless and wandering whenever they were not looking at the Queen of Scots; then indeed they suddenly assumed an ardor and

passion which changed the boy into a man. He was but little inclined to bodily exercises, and seemed a prey to a constant languor and lassitude, the cause of which the doctors sought in vain.

Over the head of the young Princess Elizabeth floated unseen, the stern, cold shadow of her future lord and all the sad and terrible romance which awaited the bride of Philip the Second and the affianced of his son.

Alas! there was no brighter fate in store for the fair and sparkling girl who rode on the other hand of the dauphin, and whose grace and beauty, wrought up with the tale of her sufferings and trials, echoed far and wide through a sympathizing world, and still suffice to throw a brilliant halo round the name of Mary Queen of Scots.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ROYAL HUNT.

HARDLY had the last pages and squires of the royal cortège disappeared beneath the chestnuts and beeches of the forest ere Catherine de Medicis withdrew from the balcony, leading the young princes Charles and Henry with her, and having sent off the elder to his tutor and the younger to her ladies, she remained with the little Princess Marguerite, who was still young enough to be allowed to see and hear anything.

The young princes had scarcely left the room when Catherine's confidential valet-de-chambre entered and announced that the two persons whom she expected were in attendance.

The queen had attached herself to the Guise party. Her husband was one of those feeble characters who can never rule alone. One day he ruled conjointly with the constable, and the Guises were everything that was bad; the next day he and the Guises ruled France together, and the constable was in disgrace.

A noble and a powerful family were the six Guises, headed by Francis, the great Duke of Guise, surnamed "Le Balafre," from the scar on his cheek, whose state and splendor were almost regal, whose horses came from Africa and Spain, whose falcons were presents from Solyman and the infidel princes, to whom the King of Navarre wrote a state letter announcing the birth of his son, afterward Henry the Fourth; and to whom even the Constable de Montmorency, in writing to him, commenced "Monseigneur," and signed "your most humble and obedient servant," to which the duke replied in a letter which commenced, "Monsieur le Connetable," and ended, "your very good friend;" a statement, by the bye, which was entirely untrue, for the Guises and the Montmorencies hated each other like cat and dog.

The duke was at Rome fighting against the Duke of Alba, and had left the house of Guise to be represented by Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine, whom

Pius the Fifth called the "Pope on the other side of the Alps," who was as proud as a Guise and as treacherous as an Italian, who conceived and executed the idea of the league and the Saint Bartholomew, and who found no little favor in the eyes of his sovereign, Lady Catherine de Medicis.

This was the man whom Catherine expected; but she had not expected to see him accompanied by a young man of from twenty-five to twenty-six, who was elegantly dressed, although he was evidently in traveling costume.

"Ah! you, Monsieur de Nemours?" exclaimed the queen. "You come from Italy? What news from Rome?"

"Bad, madame," replied the cardinal, while the young man saluted the queen.

"Bad! Do you mean that our dear cousin the duke has been beaten? Take care how you tell me that, for I shall say it is impossible."

"No, madame," answered the Duc de Nemours, "Monsieur de Guise has not been beaten. As you say, that is impossible. But he has been betrayed by Caraffa, abandoned even by the pope, and he has dispatched me to inform the king that his position is no longer tenable with honor either to himself or to France, and to beg either for speedy re-enforcements or his instant recall."

"And according to our agreement, madame," said the cardinal, "I have conducted Monsieur de Nemours to you."

"But," exclaimed Catherine, "the recall of Mon-

sieur de Guise would be abandoning the claim of the King of France to the throne of Naples, and my own to the duchy of Tuscany."

"Yes, truly, madame; but remember that it can not be long before we have war in France, and then it will not be a question of reconquering Naples or Florence, but of protecting Paris."

"What! Paris? You are witty, Monsieur le Cardinal. It seems to me that France can protect France, and that Paris can defend itself."

"I fear that you are in error, madame," said the cardinal. "Our best troops are in Italy with my brother, and, had it not been for the conduct of the Cardinal Caraffa and the treason of the Duke of Parma, who has so far forgotten what he owes to the King of France as to make common cause with the Emperor Philip the Second, would have had plenty of occupation in protecting Naples; but now that he knows that the army he has in Italy is amply sufficient to hold us in check, he will naturally turn his eyes toward France, and will not fail to profit by our weakness, even without counting that the nephew of the constable has just played a trick which will give Spain an appearance of justice in this breaking of the truce."

"You refer to the descent upon Douay?" said Catherine.

"Exactly so."

"Listen," said the queen. "You know that I detest the constable as cordially as you do. Therefore, do you work for his downfall. I will not

hinder you; on the contrary, I will afford you all the aid that lies in my power."

"And in the meantime what do you decide upon?" asked the cardinal. Then, seeing that Catherine hesitated: "You may speak before Monsieur de Nemours," said he. "He is of Savoy, it is true, but he is as truly our friend as the Prince Emmanuel Philibert is our enemy."

"Decide yourself, cardinal," said Catherine, throwing a side glance at the prelate; "I am but a weak woman, and our sex is not fitted for politics."

The cardinal really understood the queen's glance. She had no friends—she only had accomplices.

"Still, madame," answered Charles de Guise, "do me the favor to express your opinion, and you will permit me to combat it should it be in opposition to my own."

"Well, then," replied Catherine, "my opinion is, that the king, being the sole head of the state, should receive all important information before any one else, and that if Monsieur le Duc be not too fatigued, it would be better for him immediately to remount his horse and join the king, so as to deliver to him the news which your friendship has, I regret to say, made me mistress of, even before him."

The cardinal turned toward the Duc de Nemours as if about to speak, but the latter interrupted him.

"I am never fatigued," said he, "when I am required for the king's service."

"In that case," said the cardinal, "I will tell them to give you a fresh horse; and, at all events, I will

inform the secretaries that the king will hold a council immediately upon his return from the hunt. Follow me, Monsieur de Nemours."

The young duke saluted the queen, and was about to follow the cardinal, when Catherine lightly touched the arm of Lorraine.

"After you, monsieur," said Charles de Guise.

"Monseigneur!" exclaimed Nemours, hesitating.

"Lead the way, I beg."

"Yes, and I order you, Monsieur le Duc," said the queen.

The duke saw that Catherine had some private matter to communicate to the cardinal, so he made no further difficulty about taking precedence, and went out, allowing the curtain to fall behind him.

"What is it, my dear queen?" asked the cardinal.

"I wanted to tell you," answered Catherine, "that King Louis the Eleventh, who, in consideration of a loan of five hundred thousand francs, gave my ancestor, Laurent de Medicis, permission to add three fleur-de-lis to his arms, used to say, 'If my nightcap knew my secret, I would burn my nightcap.' Remember this maxim of Louis the Eleventh's; you are too confiding, cardinal."

The cardinal smiled at this piece of advice being given to him, that is to say, to the man who passed for the wariest politician in Europe; but even he had met with one more cautious than himself in the person of Catherine de Medicis, the Florentine.

The cardinal, in his turn, passed the curtain, and saw the prudent young man, who was determined

not to be suspected of eavesdropping, waiting for him at the end of the corridor.

They descended together into the court-yard, where a horse, ready saddled and bridled, was immediately placed at the disposal of the duke, who sprung into his seat with all the grace of a finished horseman, and set off for the forest at full gallop.

The young man had been told that the king would probably find the quarry near the track of Poissy. He therefore directed his course toward that place, hoping to find the hunting-party by the sound of the horns.

But on arriving at the Poissy track, he neither saw nor heard anything of the chase, and an old wood-cutter told him that it had taken the direction of Conflans.

Nemours followed the route indicated, and in about a quarter of an hour he suddenly came upon a cavalier who had stopped his horse in an open place where two paths crossed, and who was standing up in his stirrups to see further, and putting his hands to his ears in order to hear better.

He was evidently some hunter who had lost the chase; but although he had missed it, he probably knew more about its direction than the young duke, who had only arrived from Italy half an hour before. Nemours, therefore, rode straight up to him, and recognized Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery and Captain of the Scotch Guard.

As Nemours had imagined, the count was endeavoring to refind the hunt, and the position he had

chosen, overlooking five or six roads, was well suited for his purpose. The young men, who had not seen each other for six months, naturally had a hundred questions to ask each other—the count on the subject of the success of M. de Guise's arms in Italy, the duke regarding the numerous love affairs and the endless scandals of the courts.

They were engrossed in this most interesting conversation when Montgomery suddenly fancied he heard the baying of the hounds in the distance.

The count was correct in his idea; and as they looked in the direction of the noise they suddenly saw an enormous boar pass like a flash of lightning across the end of the path, closely pressed by the foremost hounds, then came the mass of the pack running steadily together, then the laggards.

The count instantly put his horn to his mouth, and sounded "*la vue*," in order to assemble the stragglers, of whom there must have been plenty, for three persons only passed after the hounds—a man and two women.

By the ardor with which the man followed the chase the two cavaliers fancied they recognized the king, but it was impossible at that distance to say who were the two amazons by whom he was so closely followed.

The Duc de Nemours and the Comte de Montgomery put their horses to the gallop and darted off in pursuit of the chase, which their position allowed them to cut into at an angle.

The king had indeed roused the boar on the Poissy

track, and it had broken cover with all the ferocity and obstinacy of an old tusker, and headed straight for Conflans. The king sounded the "lancer," and darted off in pursuit, followed by the whole hunt.

Wild boars are bad courtiers, and this particular boar had started off at full speed through the very thickest brushwood and brambles, instead of keeping to the open road and the large timber, as any well-behaved animal would have done. The consequence of this was that after about a quarter of an hour only the most ardent of the hunters and three ladies kept up with the king. These three ladies were the king's sister Marguerite, Diane de Poitiers, and the little queenlet, Mary Stuart, as Catherine de Medicis used to call her.

In spite of the courage of the illustrious hunters and huntresses, the difficulties of the ground, the thickness of the wood, and the height of the bushes, gave such an advantage to the boar and the dogs that the former might probably have made his escape altogether had it not been that, unluckily for him, at the edge of the forest he found the wall, which obliged him to return by the way he had come.

The king who relied upon his famous gray dogs, had reined in his horse patiently to await this result, and had afforded the scattered nobles time to rejoin him. The baying of the hounds was soon heard once more, and the chase now took a more open part of the forest. Still, what had happened before took place again. One by one, or rather two by two, the lords and ladies fell behind and missed the chase,

for we fear that they did not all put their splendid horses to their full speed in the king's hunting-parties; indeed, the groups who met at the various cross-paths seemed particularly to pay little attention to the horn, which was just audible in the distance; and this perhaps may have had something to do with the fact that when the Comte de Montgomery and the Duc de Nemours caught sight of the boar, it was only followed by a cavalier and two ladies.

The boar was evidently flagging, and could not hold out long; and indeed before many seconds were over, the redoubled barking of the dogs announced that the boar, determined to sell his life dearly, had turned to bay.

The sound of the king's hunting-horn mingled with the baying of the dogs, for he was not a dozen yards behind them. He turned to look for his arquebuse-bearer, but he had distanced all his companions, even those whose duty it was never to quit him, and he only saw the fair Diane and Mary Stuart coming after him at full speed.

The sound of the king's horn brought up the arquebuse-bearer with one arquebuse in his hand and another on the pommel of his saddle.

The boar, in spite of the courage of the famous "king's grays," knocked them over right and left with single blows of his tusks.

The king saw that it was quite time to put an end to this butchery, and throwing down his hunting-horn he made a sign for his arquebuse.

The match was ready lighted, and the arquebuse

presented was instantly handed to the king, who took a deliberate aim between the animal's eyes and fired; but at that very instant the beast lowered his head, and the ball, glancing off the slope of its hard, bony forehead, inflicted only a slight wound, and resulted in killing one of the dogs.

Henry remained for an instant in astonishment that the animal had not been killed, and then held out his hand for the second arquebuse, which was ready loaded and with the match lighted; but before he had time to take a second aim, the boar, by a violent effort, suddenly shook off the dogs which were clinging around him, and charging through the pack and leaving a bloody trail as he went, rushed furiously between the legs of the king's horse, ripping up the unfortunate animal, which reared and fell back, entangling the king in its fall.

All this was the work of a single instant, and passed so rapidly that none of the spectators had sufficient presence of mind to rush to the assistance of the king, who was now in an excessively dangerous position, the boar having turned round and once more come to the charge before Henry had even got time or power to draw his hunting-knife.

Brave as the king was, he had already opened his mouth to call for help—for the hideous head of the beast, his snout covered with blood, and grinding his terrible tusks, was only a few inches from his chest—when suddenly he heard a firm and steady voice whispering in his ear: "Do not move, sire, and I will answer for your safety."

Then Henry felt his arm raised, and saw a bright and pointed blade dart like lightning past him, and plunge up to the hilt in the side of the boar. At the same instant two vigorous arms seized him from behind and drew him from under the horse, leaving the new adversary exposed to the attacks of the dying boar.

He who had drawn the king out of his dangerous position was the Duc de Nemours. The other who, with one knee on the ground and his arm extended to its full extent, had driven his sword through the animal's heart with a powerful and certain stroke, was the Comte de Montgomery.

Montgomery rose, drew his sword from the body of the huge beast, wiped it on the long grass, and then, having quietly returned it to its sheath, approached the king, as if nothing out of the way had happened, saying:

"I have the honor to present to your majesty Monsieur le Duc de Nemours, who is the bearer of news from Monsieur le Duc de Guise and the brave army in Italy."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONSTABLE AND THE CARDINAL.

Two hours after the scene we have just related, and when all the congratulations had been paid to the savior of the King, Henry, with the smiling face

of a man who has just escaped a great danger and still feels himself strong, hearty and ready to confront others, entered his cabinet attended by the Cardinal Charles de Lorraine and the Constable de Montmorency, together with his ordinary counselors.

Henry saluted the constable in a friendly and soldier-like manner and the cardinal with a deferential bow.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have summoned you in consequence of the very important news which Monsieur de Nemours has brought from Italy. Things are looking black there, in consequence of his holiness the pope having broken his word, and of the treason of most of our allies. Your gallant brother, cardinal, immediately saw that he could only count upon the men he had brought with him; but, being something like you, my dear constable, and not fearing anything so long as he had a sword in his hand and a few thousand brave men at his back he attacked Campli, which he carried by assault, putting the whole population to the sword."

The constable gave a grunt of approbation.

"From Campli," continued the king, "the duke marched to lay siege to Civitella, which appears to be built upon a steep hill and to be strongly fortified. The attack was commenced before the breach was practicable, and unluckily the spot chosen was surrounded by bastions. The result was that our troops were repulsed with a loss of two hundred killed and three hundred wounded."

A smile of joy broke over the lips of the constable—the invincible had been beaten before a fifth-rate fort.

“During this time, the Duke of Alba had collected an army of fifteen thousand men, more than double what the Duc de Guise possessed, in order to force us to raise the siege, and has now entirely shut in the army of Monsieur de Guise, who has dispatched Monsieur de Nemours to us to beg for instant reinforcements, or else for permission to return to France. I have, therefore, sent for you to ask your advice how to act under these difficult circumstances.”

“Sire,” said the constable, “it is my opinion that an affair so successfully commenced must not be abandoned, and that your majesty should use every effort to support your army in Italy.”

“And you, cardinal?” asked the king.

“I, sire,” answered Charles de Lorraine, “ask the constable’s pardon, but my opinion is directly in opposition to his. I am of the opinion that it would be good policy to recall him and his army.”

“You forget, cardinal, that we are at peace, and have no need of all these illustrious conquerors.”

“I beg your majesty to ask the constable if he seriously believes in the duration of this peace,” said the cardinal, turning to Henry.

“Believe in it—of course I do!” exclaimed the constable.

“Well, I, on the contrary, do not believe in it;

and indeed I think that if your majesty wishes to deprive the King of Spain of the glory of attacking us, you had better declare war at once."

"What! in spite of our solemn truce?" exclaimed the constable, with an ardor that a by-stander might have fancied to be genuine. "You forget, cardinal, that it is every man's duty to keep his oath, and a king's even more than other men; and that France has never broken her word, even toward Turks and Saracens."

"In that case," asked the cardinal, "how did it happen that your nephew, Monsieur de Chatillon, instead of stopping quietly in his own government of Picardy, made a descent upon Douay, which would have been successful had not an old woman who was passing given the alarm?"

"Why did my nephew do it? I'll tell you why he did it!" exclaimed the constable, rushing head-foremost into the trap.

"Let us hear," answered the cardinal.

"There were ten causes. In the first place, the attempt made upon Metz by Monsieur le Comte de Megue, Governor of Luxembourg."

"Which, like that of your nephew, happily failed. But this is only one excuse—you promised us ten, constable."

"Oh, stop; that was not all; the Comte de Megue bribed a soldier to poison all the wells in Metz. You can not say that this is not true, cardinal, for the soldier was hung."

"I do not see the force of that argument, con-

stable; your family always had a taste for hanging innocent men."

"What! have you got the face to deny the count's attempt to poison the wells at Metz?"

"Quite the contrary—I am perfectly willing to admit it, if it will give you any pleasure; but you promised ten excuses—I have only heard two."

"By Heaven! I will find you plenty. I suppose you know that the Count de Berlainmont and the Sieur de Veze had been induced by the King of Spain to agree to give up the town of Bordeaux to him? You had better deny this, cardinal, and I will tell you that one of the accomplices was arrested at Saint Quentin and has confessed all. Come, you had better deny that, cardinal."

"Heaven forbid that I should deny the truth," answered the cardinal; "but this is only the third time that his majesty the King of Spain has broken the treaty of Vincelles—you promised us ten."

"I tell you once more, you shall have your infernal ten, and a dozen too, if you want them. Was not Jacques de Fleche, one of the best engineers in the Spanish service, arrested while sounding the river Oise? and did he not confess that he was employed by Emmanuel Philibert to procure plans of Montreuil, Roye, Doullens, Saint Quentin, and half a dozen other places?"

"That is perfectly true, constable; but still, we are a long way from our ten."

"Hang your ten!—have I not given plenty of reasons to show that in reality Spain has already

broken the truce, and that if my nephew did make a descent upon Douay, he was perfectly right in doing so ? ”

“ That is the very point I wanted to bring you to, constable ; and I confess that these four proofs are perfectly sufficient to convince any reasonable man that Spain has already broken the truce, and that, the truce being broken, not once, but four times over, it is Philip the Second who has broken his word, and that the King of France will not break his by recalling his army and his general from Italy and by preparing for war.”

The cardinal had hardly ceased speaking, when a strange trumpet was heard in the court-yard.

“ Oh, oh ! ” exclaimed the king, “ go and inquire, Monsieur de l’Aubespine, who blows that trumpet.”

M. de l’Aubespine went to execute the king’s orders, but returned in about five minutes, saying :

“ Sire, it is an English trumpet, blown by the outrider of the herald sent by her majesty Queen Mary.”

M. de l’Aubespine had scarcely finished speaking when another trumpet was heard playing an air decidedly Spanish.

“ Ah ! ” exclaimed Henry, “ after the wife comes the husband ! ”

Then with that majesty which he was so well able to assume : “ Gentlemen,” said he, “ let us adjourn to the throne-room, and let our court be assembled. We must do honor to the messengers of our cousins Mary and Philip.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

WAR.

THE noise of the English and Spanish trumpets had rung not only in the council chamber, but throughout the palace, like a double echo from the north and south.

The king found the greater part of the courtiers already assembled, and the ladies all at the windows, staring at the two heralds and their suites.

At the door of the council chamber the constable was accosted by a young officer who had been sent to him by his nephew, the Admiral de Coligny, who, as we have already said, was governor of Picardy, and who consequently would be first attacked in case of an invasion.

"Ah, is that you, Theligny?" said the constable, in a low voice.

"Yes, monseigneur," answered the young officer.

"And you bring me news from the admiral?"

"Yes, monseigneur."

"You have not seen nor told it to anybody?"

"The news is for his majesty, but I am instructed to inform you of it first."

"Very good—follow me."

And as the cardinal had conducted the Duc de Nemours to the apartment of Catherine de Medicis, so the Constable de Montmorency conducted Theligny to that of the Duchess de Valentinois.

During this time the court had assembled in the throne-room. Henry had the queen on his right hand, and was surrounded by his ministers, while Mmes. Marguerite and Elizabeth de France, Marie Stuart, the Duchess de Valentinois, the four Maries, and indeed all the ladies of that elegant and brilliant court, were seated on the couches opposite.

The king gave orders for the introduction of the English herald.

Long before he appeared, the clang of his spurs and those of his escort were heard approaching; at last he entered, dressed in the tabard with the English and French arms, and advanced without uncovering within ten paces of the king; then he uncovered his head, and, kneeling on one knee, pronounced the following oration in a clear, powerful voice:

“Mary, Queen of England, Ireland and France, unto Henry, King of France, sends greeting: Inasmuch as you have held relations and friendships with the English Protestants, enemies to our person, our religion, and our State, and have afforded them succor and protection against our just punishment, we, William Norry, herald of England, proclaim war against you, both by sea and land, and in token thereof we throw down our gauntlet in defiance!”

And the herald hurled his iron gauntlet on the floor at the very feet of the king.

“It is well,” said Henry, without rising. “I accept the challenge, but I wish all the world to know that I have always kept faith with your queen; but since she attacks me in so unjust a cause, I pray

Heaven that it may not profit her any more than it profited her ancestors when they attacked mine; but I wish to speak quietly and civilly, since it is a queen and not a king that sends you; were it a king I should reply in a very different tone."

Then turning to Mary Stuart:

"My fairy Queen of Scotland," said he, "as this war regards you as well as me, and as you have more claim to the crown of England than our sister Mary has to that of France, we beg you to pick up the gauntlet and to present our friend Sir William Norry with the gold chain which you wear round your neck, a chain which our dear Duchess de Valentinois will kindly replace by her necklace of pearls, and I engage that she shall not lose by so doing. Go, my child—it wants a woman's hand to pick up a woman's glove."

Mary Stuart rose, and with exquisite grace took the chain from her neck and threw it round that of the herald; then, with an air of pride which sat well on her beautiful face:

"I pick up this glove," said she, "not only in the name of France, but also in that of Scotland. Herald, tell this to our sister Mary."

The herald rose, and, bowing slightly, withdrew to the left of the throne.

"The desires of their majesties of France and Scotland shall be executed," said he.

"Introduce the herald of our brother Philip the Second," said Henry.

The same clang of spurs which had announced the

entrance of the English herald was heard once more, and the Spanish herald made his appearance even more proud and haughty than his colleague; he advanced within ten paces of the king, and, instead of kneeling, he contented himself with slightly bowing, and stood twirling his mustache before he spoke, which he did at last in the following terms:

“Philip, by the grace of God, King of Castile, Leon, Grenada, Navarre, Aragon, Naples, Sicily, Majorca, Sardinia, and the Isles and Indies of the Pacific; Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Lothier, Brabant, Limbourg, Luxembourg, Guelders; Count of Flanders and Artois, Marquis of the Holy Empire, Lord of Frise, Salimes, Malines, and of the cities, towns and lands of Utrecht, Over-Yssel and Groeningen; Governor in Asia and Africa; to you, Henry of France, for reason of the descent made upon the town of Douay, and the pillage of the town of Sens, which have been committed by order of your Governor of Picardy, in contravention of the truce of Vincelles, we announce war against you, both by sea and by land, and in the name of my king, I, Guzman d’Avila, herald of Castile, Leon, Grenada, Navarre and Aragon, throw down my gauntlet in token of defiance!”

And drawing the gauntlet from his right hand, the herald chucked it insolently at the feet of the king.

Henry’s dark face seemed to grow pale with anger as he noticed the demeanor of the Spanish herald.

“Our brother Philip,” said he, “takes the initia-

tive, and addresses to us the reproaches which he himself deserves; but, since he has a grievance against us, he would have done better to have challenged us personally. We should willingly have met him man to man, and let God judge between us. Tell him, Don Guzman d'Avila, that we accept his challenge of war with the greatest alacrity, but that if he should wish to turn it into a personal encounter, we should accept with even greater pleasure."

The constable touched the king's arm in an expressive manner, but Henry continued:

"And you may add that when we made this proposal, you saw the Constable de Montmorency touch our arm to remind us of the prophecy that we should die in a duel, and that, at the risk of that prediction being accomplished, we repeated our offer, hoping that it might assist in reassuring our brother as to the result of the trial, and might influence him to accept our proposition. Monsieur de Montmorency, as Constable of France, have the goodness to pick up our brother Philip's gauntlet."

Then, turning once more to the herald:

"Here, my friend," said he, taking a bag of gold which was lying ready behind him, "it is far from here to Valladolid, and since you have come solely to bring me such welcome news, it is not fair that you should spend your own money or your master's on the journey. We beg you, therefore, to accept these hundred gold crowns for your expenses."

"Sire," answered the Spaniard, haughtily, "my master and I belong to the land where gold grows,

and we have only to stoop when we are in want of it."

And bowing to the king he stepped back.

"Ah!" murmured Henry, "proud as a Castilian. Monsieur de Montgomery, take this sack and throw the gold to the poor."

Montgomery took the bag and emptied it from the window, its contents being received with perfect howls of joy by those below.

"Gentlemen," said Henry, rising, "it has always been the habit of the court of France to give a fête whenever war has been declared against us by any neighboring sovereign. There will be a double fête to-night, since there is a double cause for rejoicing."

Then, turning to the heralds:

"Sir William Norry and Don Guzman d'Avila," said he, "since you are the subjects of the fêtes, you are invited by right as representatives of our sister Mary of England and our brother Philip of Spain."

"Sire," whispered the constable, "does your majesty desire to hear some news fresh from Picardy, which my nephew has sent by a lieutenant named Theligny, of the dauphin's company?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Henry, "bring him to me—he will be welcome."

Five minutes afterward the young man was shown into the king's private cabinet, where he stood respectfully waiting until the latter should speak to him.

"Well," said the king, "what news do you bring of our dear admiral's health?"

"Excellent news on that score, sire; I am happy to say that the admiral never was better."

"May Heaven preserve his health, and all will go well. Where did you leave him?"

"At La Fere, sire."

"And what news did he charge you to bring to me?"

"Sire, he desired me to warn your majesty to prepare for a great war. The enemy has assembled upward of fifty thousand men, and the admiral believes that all that has been done hitherto is only a blind to conceal their real destination."

"And what is the enemy doing at present?" asked the king.

"The Duke of Savoy, who holds the chief command, accompanied by the Duke d'Aerschoot, the Comte de Mansfeld, and Count Egmont, has advanced to the general rendezvous at Givet."

"I have heard all that from the Duc de Nevers," said the king, "and he added that he thought that Philibert Emmanuel chiefly threatened Rocroy or Mezieres, and that in his opinion Rocroy was not in a state to stand a long siege; that he had requested the duke to see whether it was advisable to abandon it, and since then, that he had not heard further."

"I can inform your majesty," said Theligny. "Monsieur de Nevers had established himself there, and, sheltered by the walls, was enabled to give the enemy so hot a reception that after a slight affair, in

which they lost a few men, they thought it wise to retire by the ford of Houssou, between Nismes and Hauteroche, and from thence he took the road by Chimay, Glayon, and Montreuil-aux-Dames; passed La Chapelle, which they pillaged, and Vervins, which they burned, and at last advanced to Guise, and the admiral does not doubt but that their intention is to besiege the place where Monsieur de Vassy is in command."

"What force has the Duke of Savoy under his flag?" asked the king.

"About forty thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, partly Flemish, partly Spanish and German."

"And how many can the admiral and the Duc de Nevers dispose of?"

"Even by uniting their forces, scarcely eighteen thousand foot and six thousand horse, and among these are some fifteen hundred or two thousand English, who can not be relied upon in case of a war with Queen Mary."

"Then, deducting the necessary garrisons which must be left in the towns, we shall hardly have more than twelve to fourteen thousand men to give you, constable," said the king, turning to Montmorancy.

"Well, sire, however few there are, I will do my best with them. I have heard that an old general called Xenophon had only ten thousand men when he accomplished a retreat of nearly one hundred and fifty leagues in face of a hostile army, and that

Leonidas, King of Sparta, had only three hundred when he held his ground for a week against the army of Xerxes, which was far more numerous than that of the Duke of Savoy."

"Then you are not disheartened, my dear constable?" said Henry.

"On the contrary, I never felt less so; all I want is a man who can give me some information regarding the state of Saint Quentin."

"And what is that for, constable?"

"Because with the keys of Saint Quentin one may open the gates of Paris, as the old proverb says. Do you know Saint Quentin, Monsieur de Theligny?"

"No, monseigneur; but if I may presume—"

"Yes, confound it, presume, and make haste; the king permits it."

"Well then, monseigneur, I have with me a sort of squire, whom the admiral gave me, and who, if he chooses, is as capable as any one of enlightening you on the point."

"What! if he chooses?" exclaimed the constable.

"By Heaven! we will pretty soon make him choose."

"He doubtless will not dare to refuse to answer the questions which are put to him by the Constable of France, only he is as sharp as a needle, and he will answer them as he likes."

"As he likes! You mean as I like, I suppose?"

"That is the very point upon which I wish you not to make any mistake. He will answer as he likes, and *not* as you like, particularly as you, monseigneur,

never having been at Saint Quentin, can not very well tell whether his answers are true or not."

"If they are not true, I'll have him hung like a dog!"

"That would be a way of punishing him, but not of making him useful. Believe me, monseigneur, the man is shrewd, ready, and brave enough, too, when he chooses."

"What do you mean by when he chooses?" broke in the constable. "Is not he always brave?"

"He is brave when he can get anything by it, and not when he can not. It is as much as can be expected from a soldier of fortune."

"My dear constable," said the king, "when one is anxious for an end one takes care of the means. This man may be useful to us. Monsieur de Theligny knows him; let him interrogate him."

"Very well," said the constable, "but you know that I have my way of speaking to people."

"Yes, monseigneur," answered Theligny, smiling, "we all know your method, and it has its advantages; but in the instance of my squire Yvonnet, the only result would be that he would join the enemy on the very first occasion, and I take it his information would be even more useful to them than to us."

"To the enemy! He'll desert to the enemy, will he? By Heaven! we'll stop that, for we'll hang him straight off. It seems to me that he is a scoundrel, a thief and a traitor, this squire of yours, Monsieur de Theligny."

"He is simply an adventurer, monseigneur."

"Oh, oh! and so my nephew employs these rascals?"

"Beggars must not be choosers, monseigneur," answered Theligny, laughing. Then, turning to the king: "I place my poor Yvonnet under your majesty's protection, and I demand that whatever he says or does, I may be allowed to take him back with me as safe and sound as I brought him here."

"You have my word, monsieur," said the king. "Go and bring in your squire."

"If your majesty permits it, I will simply make a sign, and he will come."

"Sign."

Theligny went to the window, which opened on to the park, and whistled. Five minutes afterward Yvonnet made his appearance.

The young man saw at a glance the kind of company he was in, and he doubtless recognized either the king or the constable, or both, for he stood respectfully at the door.

"Come in, Yvonnet," said Theligny. "Here are his majesty Henry the Second and the Constable de Montmorency, who upon my report of your merits desire to see you."

"I thank you, lieutenant," said Yvonnet, taking three steps forward, and then stopping, half cautiously, half respectfully. "My merits, small as they are, are at the feet of his majesty and at the service of the constable."

"Come," said the latter, "enough of that stuff. Just answer me straightforwardly, or else—"

Yvonnet darted a glance toward Theligny, as much as to say, "Is it a danger that I run, or an honor that is being done me?"

But Theligny, strong in the king's word, answered:

"My dear Yvonnet," said he, "the king knows that you are a gallant cavalier, much attached to the ladies, and spend the greater part of the profits of your courage and intelligence upon your toilet; and, as he wishes to make use of your intelligence first, and your courage afterward, he has charged me to promise you ten gold crowns if you will give him and the constable some positive information regarding the town of Saint Quentin."

"Will my lieutenant be good enough to explain to the king that I am a member of a band of good fellows who have all sworn to throw half their gains into the general stock, so that out of these ten crowns five only will belong to me, and five will be the property of the society?"

"And I should like to know what on earth is to prevent your keeping the ten and saying nothing about it, you confounded idiot!" exclaimed the constable.

"Sire," said Yvonnet, with a respect and grace which would have done honor to a finished courtier, "your majesty will observe that I did not fix any price upon my services, small or great, which it is both my duty and my pleasure to render to your majesty."

It was my lieutenant, Monsieur de Theligny, who spoke of ten gold crowns; but it having been mentioned, I thought it my duty to inform your majesty of a certain association which it was not possible that you should be aware of, and whereby half of your majesty's bounty would be diverted from the person it was intended for. And now that I have explained this to your majesty, I am perfectly ready to afford you any information in my power without there being any question either of five, ten or twenty gold crowns."

And the adventurer bowed once more, with a grace which would have been creditable to an Italian prince or a count of the Holy Empire.

"Bravo!" exclaimed the king. "You are right, Monsieur Yvonnet, and you will find that you will be no loser by trusting to the generosity of Henry of France."

Yvonnet smiled as if to say, "I know my man."

"Come, Yvonnet," said Theligny, "be good enough to prove to his majesty that I was not wrong in praising your intelligence by giving him and the constable some information as to the present state of the ramparts of Saint Quentin."

Yvonnet shook his head.

"One would think the fellow knew something about it," muttered the constable.

"Sire," answered Yvonnet, not in the least degree disturbed by this observation, "I have the honor to inform your majesty that the town of Saint Quentin, unaware that it runs any risk, and consequently un-

prepared to resist an attack, is scarcely in a state to defy an assault."

"But still," said Henry, "it has ramparts."

"Yes," answered Yvonnet, "ramparts with alternate round and square towers, flanked by curtains, and with two hornworks, one guarding the Faubourg d'Isle; but the ramparts have no parapets, and are only defended by an advanced moat, and scarcely rises above the general level of the surrounding country, and is commanded in numerous places by the neighboring heights, and even by the houses built along the exterior moat, and on the right of the road to Guise between the Somme and Porte d'Isle, the old wall, as the rampart is called at this spot, is in such bad condition that an active man can easily scale it."

"But you brute!" exclaimed the constable, "if you are an engineer, why on earth did you not say so at once?"

"I am not an engineer, constable."

"Then what in the name of all the furies are you?"

Yvonnet cast down his eyes with affected modesty.

"Yvonnet is attached to a young lady who lives in the Faubourg d'Isle," said Theligny, "and in order to visit her it is necessary to study the strong and weak points of the wall."

"Ah, ah!" murmured the constable, "here is a fine reason."

"Go on, Monsieur Yvonnet," said the king, "and

I will give you a gold cross to carry to your mistress when you see her again."

"And there never will have been a gold cross hung upon a fairer neck than that of Gudule, your majesty."

"Why, I declare, the brute is going to paint his mistress's portrait!" exclaimed the constable.

"And why not, if she is pretty?" said the king, laughing. "And now, what garrison is there in Saint Quentin?"

"None."

"None!" exclaimed Montmorency; "and how on earth does that happen?"

"Because there are no barracks in the town, and the defense in time of war is a right which belongs to the bourgeoisie, and which they are particularly proud of."

"In the first place, then, Saint Quentin must be well garrisoned," said the king.

"The admiral was engaged in negotiating this very matter when I left," said Theligny.

"Now," asked the king, "are the approaches to the town easy?"

"Yes, sire, on three sides—those of Faubourg d'Isle, Remicourt and of the chapel of Eparguemaille, but on the other side, by Tourrival, it is necessary to cross the marshes of Grosnard, which are full of holes and quagmires."

The constable had returned little by little, and was listening eagerly.

"In case of need," said he, "would you under-

take to guide a body of troops across these marshes?"

"Most certainly; but as I have had the honor of stating before, there is one of my companions, called Maldent, who is even better acquainted with the place than I am."

"Constable," said the king, "be good enough to give this young man forty gold crowns for the valuable information he has afforded us respecting Saint Quentin, and add ten more from me to buy a cross for Mademoiselle Gudule."

"Forty crowns! Forty lashes, forty cuts on the head, forty floggings!" grumbled Montmorency.

"You hear me, cousin?" said Henry. "Take care that you do not make me break my word."

Then, turning to Theligny:

"Monsieur," said he, "the constable will give you orders to take horses from my stables here and at Compiègne. Do not mind killing them, but try to be at La Fere to-morrow. It is important that the admiral should know of the declaration of war as soon as possible. Good-bye, monsieur, and God speed you."

Theligny and his squire bowed respectfully to the king, and followed the constable. Ten minutes after they were galloping along the road to Paris, and the constable went back to rejoin the king, who had not left his cabinet.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH THE READER RETURNS TO A WELL-KNOWN
LOCALITY.

LIEUTENANT THELIGNY and Yvonnet, who had arrived at La Fere in an incredibly short time after leaving the king, presented themselves immediately at the admiral's quarters.

The lieutenant made himself known, and was introduced at once into Coligny's cabinet, followed by Yvonnet, who, with his ordinary tact, remained standing at the door.

The admiral was bending over one of the incomplete maps of the period, which he was endeavoring to fill in from the information which he was obtaining from a man with a sharp face, a pointed nose, and clear eye, who was none other than our old acquaintance Maldent, the former advocate's clerk of Saint Quentin.

Theligny explained his interview with the king and the constable in a few words, and gave Coligny the letters from his uncle.

"Yes," said the admiral, "I agree with him that Saint Quentin is the most important town to guard, and therefore, my dear Theligny, I sent your company there yesterday, and you shall go and join them this very day, and announce that I shall speedily follow you."

And Coligny once more bent over his map, totally absorbed in the details with which Maldent was furnishing him.

Theligny, who perfectly understood the serious and profound character of the admiral, and knew that in all probability he would have more directions to give him on the subject of Saint Quentin as soon as he had finished his chart, ordered Yvonnet to go and wait for him at the camp. The latter bowed silently and withdrew, and then, springing on his horse, was outside the town in a few moments.

The admiral's camp, which had first been established at Pierrepont, had afterwards been transferred to La Fere, as he thought that although it would be impossible for him, with his fifteen or eighteen thousand men, to resist an attack in the open country, yet that they would stand a good chance under the fortifications of the town.

Once arrived at the camp, Yvonnet stood up in his stirrups to try and see which of the tents belonged to the band of adventurers, of which he was a member; and his attention was soon drawn to a group, in the midst of which he recognized Procope, who was seated on a stone, and was writing with his knee for a table.

A man, who was no other than Pilletrousse, was making signs to them from the door of the tent in very decent condition.

Yvonnet immediately decided that this must be the tent to a ninth part of which he had a right, and in a few seconds he was by the side of Pilletrousse,

who, before welcoming his companion, commenced making, first one, then a second, then a third tour of admiration round his friend.

At the third circle Pilletrousse stopped, and with that peculiar click of the tongue which is so wonderfully expressive:

"Confound it," said he "and here's a horse! Why it's worth forty gold crowns. Where the devil did you steal it from?"

"Hush!" said Yvonnet; "speak respectfully of the animal, it comes out of his majesty's stables, and is only lent to me."

"That is unlucky," said Pilletrousse.

"Why?"

"Because I have got a purchaser."

"Ah!" said Yvonnet, "and who is he?"

"It is I," said a voice behind Yvonnet.

Yvonnet turned round to examine the speaker who had made his appearance so much to the purpose. He was a young man of twenty-three or twenty-four, half-armed, according to the ordinary custom of soldiers in camp.

It only needed one glance at the square shoulders, the head, which seemed half hidden in the mass of red hair and beard, and the clear blue eye, full of dogged ferocity, for the adventurer to recognize his man.

"My gentleman," said he, "you have just overheard my reply. The horse belongs to his majesty the King of France, who had the kindness to lend it me to return to the camp. If he claims it, it is

only right that I should return it to him, if not, it is very much at your service—the price, of course, being agreed upon between us beforehand.”

“That is my intention,” answered the stranger. “I am rich, and know how to be generous.”

Yvonnet bowed.

“Besides,” continued the gentleman, “this is not the only matter in which I require your assistance.”

This time Yvonnet and Pilletrousse both bowed.

“How many men are there in your band?”

“Unless anything has happened to any of my comrades during my absence,” said Yvonnet, looking at Pilletrousse, “there are nine of us.”

“And nine brave men, I suppose?”

Yvonnet smiled modestly, while Pilletrousse shrugged his shoulders.

“In truth those are not bad samples,” continued the stranger, pointing to Frantz and Heinrich; “if they are members of the troop.”

“They are,” answered Pilletrousse, with true Spartan brevity.

“Very good; then we can negotiate the matter.”

“Oh, pardon me,” said Yvonnet, “but we are in the service of the admiral.”

“Except two days a week, which we have reserved for ourselves. Procope introduced this clause into the agreement, in case we should wish either to try any little enterprise on our own account, or to accept any proposition that any honorable gentleman should feel inclined to make to us.”

“I shall only want you for a single day and night,

so that it will suit to a nicety. And now, where can I find you when I want you."

"At Saint Quentin, probably," answered Yvonnet; "personally, I can answer for being there to-day."

"And two of us," continued Pilletrousse, "are there already, namely Lactance and Malemort. As to the rest of the troop—"

"As to the rest of the troop," broke in Yvonnet, "they are not likely to be long absent, since I heard the admiral say, this very day, that he himself would be there in two or three days."

"Very good," said the gentleman. "Then we meet again at Saint Quentin, my friends."

And with a careless nod the stranger moved off.

Theligny, at this moment, arrived to look for his squire. He brought the information that the admiral, having now united all the troops that he expected round him, and having consulted with the constable, was about to set out for Saint Quentin with five or six hundred men, including the whole of our adventurers who are not already there.

CHAPTER XX.

SAINT QUENTIN.

As Yvonnet had told the constable, Saint Quentin was six leagues from La Fere, and the horses, which had only arrived from Noyon an hour before, took three hours to perform the distance. At last, how-

ever, the two cavaliers crossed the exterior boulevard, left the road to Guise on the right, gave their names at the gates of the town, passed under the old archway, and found themselves in the Faubourg d'Isle.

"Will my lieutenant excuse me for a few minutes, or would he prefer to make a short *détour*, and learn what is taking place in the town?" asked Yvonnet.

"Ah, ah!" said Theligny, "it strikes me that Mademoiselle Gudule does not live far from here."

"Exactly so, lieutenant."

"But is it not somewhat indiscreet?" asked Theligny.

"Not in the least. By day I pass for a mere acquaintance."

And turning down a side lane, Yvonnet soon came upon a little window half hidden in nasturtiums and convolvulus, which he could just reach by rising in his stirrups. At the moment of his arrival the window opened as if by magic, and a charming little face, all rosy with blushes, appeared amid the flowers.

"Ah, Gudule!" said Yvonnet, "how did you divine my arrival?"

"I did not divine it. I was at the other window, which looks over the road to La Fere, and I saw two horsemen coming this way, and though I had no reason to think that you were one of them, yet somehow I could not take my eyes off them, and as they came closer I recognized you, and ran here, trembling lest you should pass without noticing me, not only because you have some one with you, but also because you are so grandly and beautifully

dressed, that I thought you must have made your fortune."

"The person by whom I have the honor to be accompanied, my dear Gudule, and who has allowed me to come out of the road to see you, is my lieutenant, Monsieur de Theligny, who will have a few questions to ask you respecting the state of the town."

Gudule cast a timid glance toward the lieutenant, who saluted her with a polite bow, which was responded to by a blush and a courtesy.

"As to the change of costume you see in me," continued Yvonnet, "it is owing to the liberality of the king, who, knowing my acquaintance with you, charged me also to deliver this gold cross to you."

And Yvonnet drew out the cross and held it to Gudule, who at first hesitated to take it.

"No, Yvonnet," said she; "it is a shame of you to laugh at me."

"I am not laughing at you, Gudule. Here is my lieutenant, who will answer for the truth of what I say."

"Indeed, my pretty maid," said Theligny, "I was there when the king gave Yvonnet the cross for you."

"Then you know the king?" asked Gudule, quite dazzled by the splendor of such an idea.

"Since yesterday, Gudule, and since yesterday the king knows of you, and of your brave uncle Jean Pequoy, to whom my lieutenant brings a letter from the admiral."

Theligny gave a second sign of assent, and Gudule, whose hesitation had vanished by this time, passed

her little hand tremblingly across the flowers and took the cross.

"And now, Yvonnet," said Theligny, "will you ask the fair Gudule where and in what disposition we shall find her uncle?"

"My uncle is at the town hall, sir," answered Gudule, with her eyes fixed on the cross, "and, I believe, in the best disposition for defending the town."

"Thank you, pretty one. Come along, Yvonnet."

"Come back soon," whispered she to Yvonnet, as she disappeared behind the flowers.

The two horsemen followed the path between the Somme and the fountain, left the abbey and church of Saint Quentin-en-Isle on the left, crossed a bridge which brought them opposite the chapel of the holy martyr, then a second leading to St. Peter's close, and a third which stood facing the two towers of the Porte d'Isle.

The gate was guarded by two soldiers of Theligny's regiment and one townsman.

This time there was no need for the lieutenant to give his name. It was the soldiers who came to ask for news. They said that the enemy was reported to be close, and that the little body of a hundred and fifty men, under the orders of a lieutenant, was somewhat lost in the midst of all these bourgeois, who took fright occasionally and spent their time in running about the streets, and in endless discussions at the town hall, where there was talking to any extent, but nothing done.

The young officer had made his appearance at an opportune moment. The citizens, prompted by the eloquence of Jean Peuquoy and his brother, had just unanimously decided that Saint Quentin, faithful to its king, and relying on its patron saint, would defend itself to the very last extremity.

The news which Theligny brought of the speedy approach of the admiral put the finishing touch to their enthusiasm. The bourgeois formed themselves on the spot into bodies of fifty with an officer to each body. The mayor opened the arsenal of the town hall, which, unfortunately, only contained some fifteen pieces of cannon of all sorts and conditions, and six-and-thirty arquebuses, although there were halberds and pikes in plenty.

Jean Peuquoy was elected captain of one of the companies, Guillaume lieutenant of another. Honors were pouring in upon the family; but honors of this description are somewhat dangerous.

The total muster of troops consisted of a hundred and twenty or thirty men of the dauphin's company, about a hundred of the company of M. de Breuil, governor of the town, who had arrived from Abbeville a week since, and of two hundred bourgeois, divided into four companies of fifty men each. Three of these were armed with arblasts, pikes and halberds, the other had arquebuses.

Suddenly a fifth and unexpected corps made its appearance, and was greeted with shouts of enthusiasm.

It emerged from the Rue Croix-belle-Porte, and

was composed of a hundred Jacobin friars, armed with pikes and halberds, and led by a man under whose robe might be seen the sparkling of a coat of mail, and who carried a drawn sword in his hand.

Yvonnet turned round, attracted by the shouts, and after staring for some time at their leader :

“ May the devil take me,” exclaimed he, “ if it is not Lactance ! ”

It was indeed Lactance, who, thinking that there was a sharpish campaign coming, had retired into the Jacobin monastery, in order to do penance beforehand for as many sins as possible, and put himself in a state of grace before the killing commenced. But while there he had thought it a pity not to do a little business, and consequently he had communicated to the monks, as an inspiration from Heaven, his idea of forming a religious corps for the defense of Saint Quentin ; and, as the holy brothers seemed inclined to look upon it in that light, he had obtained permission to cut an hour off the matins and another off the vespers in order to drill the regiment. After three days, Lactance had thought them sufficiently skilled in military manœuvres to be produced, and he had brought them out into the square of the town hall amid the acclamations of the populace.

Saint Quentin could now count upon one hundred and twenty men of the dauphin’s company, one hundred of the governor’s company, two hundred bourgeois, and a hundred monks—in all, five hundred combatants.

Hardly had these forces been mustered, when cries

of alarm were heard coming from the direction of the Rue Saint Andre, and people were seen running with their hands raised to heaven in sign of despair. They had seen a crowd of peasants flying terror-stricken across the plain between Homblieres and Mesnil Saint Laurent, trampling down the corn, and evidently endeavoring to escape from some pursuit.

Orders were instantly issued to close the gates and man the ramparts. Lactance, who during the tumult preserved all the calm of a true Christian, ordered his monks to harness themselves to the cannon, and to drag eight to the wall which extends from the Porte d'Isle to the Dameuse Tower, two to the wall of the old market, three between the great tower and the small bridge, and the other two to the old wall of the Faubourg d'Isle.

Theligny and Yvonnet, who felt that, in spite of their tremendous journey of the day before, their horses were still good for something, rode out of the gate of Remicourt, and galloped across the plain to ascertain the cause of the general flight.

In the first individual they met, Yvonnet recognized Malemort.

"To arms!" howled the latter, with the full force of his lungs; "to arms! to arms! to arms!" and informed Yvonnet, when they met, that the Spaniards had already taken Origny, and were in full march upon Saint Quentin.

Yvonnet took his companion behind him on the croup, and all three returned to Saint Quentin, crying, "To arms!"

The whole town was expecting their return, but so great was the enthusiasm, that the news of the approach of the hostile army only served to increase the confidence of the defenders.

Luckily, among the governor's company there were forty gunners, who were distributed among the fifteen guns, which the monks undertook to serve.

By this time the heads of the Spanish column were in sight.

The town council determined to send a courier to the admiral, to inform him of their situation; but no one was willing to quit the town in the hour of danger.

Yvonnet offered Malemort, who immediately mounted and galloped off in the direction of La Fere.

The gates were then opened to receive the fugitives from Origny Saint Benoit, and the townsfolk vied with one another in showing them hospitality. Messengers were then dispatched to the surrounding villages, to collect provisions and bring them into Saint Quentin.

The hostile army advanced in an immense line, whose length appeared to show that it was the main body of the Spanish, German and Walloon forces; that is to say, about fifty or sixty thousand men; and before the somber line were seen burning villages and flaming farms, just as, during an eruption of Etna, the trees and shrubs seem to catch fire and blaze, even before the lava stream touches them.

The townsmen, grouped upon the Remicourt rampart, watched all this with intense anxiety, and

greeted every fresh fire with a fresh volley of curses hurled at the advancing foe.

For some time the gates remained open. At last the enemy came so close that they were obliged to be closed. Then the unlucky fugitives from the burned and plundered villages were obliged to pass round Saint Quentin, and seek refuge at Vermaud, Pontru and Caulincourt.

The drum beat as a sign for all non-combatants to leave the ramparts, and the defenders were left standing, silent, determined and terrible, like men in a great and universal danger.

"As far as I can see, Yvonnet," said Theligny, "it is somewhere about your lady-love's house that the music is going to commence. If you have any curiosity to hear what tune they play, come with me."

"Most willingly, lieutenant," answered Yvonnet, with that nervous quiver which always with him preceded a battle; and with clinched teeth and a somewhat pale cheek he followed Theligny, who took half his soldiers with him, leaving the other half to support, and, if necessary, set an example to the bourgeois. We shall see in the end that it was the bourgeois who set the example to the soldiers.

As Theligny had foreseen, the music began with a grand crash at the Faubourg d'Isle, and more than once made the listeners lower their heads. But little by little the bourgeois, who had commenced by being the laughing-stock of the soldiers, got accustomed to the work, and became as eager as any one.

The Spaniards, however, poured on in such masses

that the bourgeois were soon obliged to abandon the exterior boulevard, which they had at first tried to defend; but being protected by the two pieces of cannon and the arquebusiers of the old wall, they retreated in good order, carrying their wounded, though they left three dead upon the ground.

As soon as the bourgeois and Theligny's soldiers had quitted the boulevard it was taken possession of by the two Spanish chiefs, Julien Romeron and Carondelet, who occupied all the houses of the faubourg. But when they endeavored to cross the open space between the exterior boulevard and the old wall, they were received with so hot and well-sustained a fire that they were obliged to fall back once more to the shelter of the houses, from the windows of which they continued firing until the shades of evening put an end to the skirmish on the 2d August, 1557.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH THE ADMIRAL KEEPS HIS PROMISE.

MALEMORT all this time had been galloping along the road to La Fere, where he arrived in about an hour and a half, and rode up to the admiral's door.

Seeing a man arrive at the full speed of his horse, with his clothes covered with dust and blood, and his face bound up in a linen mask, with holes for the eyes and mouth, it was not easy to recognize Malemort; but it was easy to see that, whoever it was, he must be the bearer of some tidings or other, and

consequently he was instantly shown into the admiral's apartment.

Coligny was with his uncle, the constable, who had just arrived.

Malemort related the capture of Origny Saint Benoit, the massacre of those who had endeavored to defend the castle, and the burning of the villages, which marked the advance of the Spanish army with ruin and desolation.

The uncle and nephew instantly settled their separate work. Coligny, with five or six hundred men, was to start immediately, throw himself into Saint Quentin, and defend it to the last extremity; while the constable, with the rest of the army, was to form a junction with the Duc de Nevers, who, with a troop numbering only eight or nine thousand men, and consequently too weak to attack the enemy, who were fifty thousand strong, was hanging about the flanks of the Spaniards, hoping to draw some advantage from their mistakes.

The admiral had "Mount saddle, to horse, and away!" sounded through the camp without delay. On the advice of Maldent, whom he took for a guide, he decided upon adopting the route by Ham, instead of the direct road, calculating from the information received that the Spaniards were attacking the town on the sides of Remicourt, Saint Jean and the Faubourg d'Isle, and that consequently these three sides were closed.

According to Maldent, the only road which they had any chance of finding open was that from Ham,

which led across the marshes, and was quite impracticable to any one who was not well acquainted with it.

The admiral took with him three bands under the command of the Captains Saint Andre, Rambouillet and Louis Poy. The last, however, had only arrived from Gascoigny the day before, and the men were so fatigued that they were obliged to halt on the road from La Fere to Ham.

The admiral arrived at Ham at about five o'clock in the evening, but as it was his determination to reach St. Quentin that night, he continued his march after resting an hour only, accompanied by his men-at-arms and two companies of foot soldiers.

When they were about two leagues from Saint Quentin night fairly closed in; but Maldent was there, and he answered for the safety of all those who chose to follow him, and, in the hope of being suitably rewarded, offered to walk before the admiral's horse with a rope round his neck.

Captain Rambouillet's band followed Maldent's lead, but Saint Andre said that he had a good guide of his own, and preferred following him; and all the leaders were so independent and so much on their own account, that Coligny did not like to demand that everybody should trust Maldent as he did himself. Saint Andre, therefore, went his own way and left the admiral to go his.

Coligny did not meet with any obstacle. The town had been entirely surrounded on all sides, excepting that of the Faubourg Ponthville, which had been

reserved for the English army, which was hourly expected, and it was exactly opposite this spot that the admiral arrived.

Coligny had surveyed the hostile encampment, and had seen the watch-fires extending from the chapel of Eparguemaille to near Galliard. It seemed as if it had been arranged on purpose to favor his little troop, so much so that he feared that the enemy must have got information of his march, and had consequently formed an ambuscade.

Procope, whose frequent conversations with Maldent had taught him the patois of the province, offered to go and reconnoiter. The admiral accepted the offer, and halted the troop.

In about three quarters of an hour the pioneer returned. The road was perfectly open, and he had been able to approach so close to the town that he had seen the sentinel on the walls, and had whistled to him across the little stream which at that time flowed immediately beneath the ramparts. The sentinel had stopped and stared out into the darkness to see who was whistling. Procope had repeated his signal, and had then informed the guard of the admiral's approach, and he promised to inform the watch at the Ponthville gate, so that Coligny might be admitted the very instant he arrived.

The admiral thanked Procope for his courage and intelligence, and once more set out under the guidance of Maldent.

At thirty paces from the gate, a man with a pistol in his hand suddenly sprung up, ready to give the

alarm in case it should turn out to be a hostile instead of a friendly troop, while the ramparts were seen lined with men.

The man with the pistol who seemed to start out of the moat was the Lieutenant Theligny. He advanced, saying:

“France and Theligny.”

“France and Coligny,” answered the admiral.

It was really the promised re-enforcement. The gates were opened, and Coligny and his hundred and twenty men admitted into the town.

The news of the arrival soon spread through the town, and the inhabitants ran half dressed out of the houses, uttering cries of joy, and many began to illuminate. But the admiral silenced the cries and extinguished the lights. He feared lest the enemy's army should understand. Besides, St. Andre and his troop had not yet arrived. Three o'clock in the morning came and brought no signs of them.

When day began to dawn, Lactance advanced with six or eight of his Jacobins, and the good fathers, who were shielded by their dress from suspicion, offered to spread themselves about the country and look for the lost troop. Their offer was accepted, and they set off in different directions. Between four and five, the first troop of about sixty men appeared, led by two of the priests, and in about another hour a second body of about the same number of men, with whom was St. Andre himself. Their guide had lost his way, and without the help of the priests misfortune might have overtaken them. The garrison

was now re-enforced by two hundred and fifty men. This was numerically but a feeble addition, but the presence of their leader gave courage to the most timid and produced an immense moral effect. Theligny, the governor of the town, gave an exact account of the state of affairs to the admiral. Perfectly convinced that it was necessary to defend the Faubourg d'Isle to the last extremity, it was to that point that Coligny first directed his steps. On the top of the old wall, amid the balls which whistled around him, he decided that at nightfall a sortie should be made for the purpose of burning the neighboring houses, from the interior of which the enemy were continually annoying the soldiers on the ramparts. The admiral also ordered them to open an embrasure in each side of the rampart and to place a cannon in each. The admiral then came down to the Hotel de Ville, and there he asked for a list of all the able men, and commanded a search to be instituted for all the arms that might be in the town, and ordered a list to be prepared where every man or woman ready to assist in the works should inscribe their names. He also ordered that all the tools, baskets, spades and pick-axes that could be found should be collected together, and that an account should be drawn up of all the grain, flour, wine, cattle or provisions of any kind in public magazines or in private houses, so as to establish order and avoid pillage. Lastly, he demanded an exact statement not only of the artillery, but of the quantity of powder and ball, and of the number of men who belonged to that service.

On going round the ramparts Coligny had remarked, near the Porte St. Jean, about one hundred feet from the walls, a number of gardens filled with fruit trees and surrounded by high and thick hedges. These offered to the enemy a shelter which would permit them to approach the ramparts. The admiral asked permission to cut them down, which was immediately granted, and he at once put in a requisition for all the carpenters of the town for this purpose, and with what were cut down they were to make fascines.

Then, seeing the whole assembly, nobles, bourgeois and soldiers, animated by the same spirit of enthusiasm, Coligny retired to the governor's house, where he had given a rendezvous to the officers of all the companies. This house was situated in the Rue de la Monare. There the admiral acquainted them with all he had done, communicated to them the good feeling of the inhabitants, and their resolution to defend their town to the last, and entreated them to do their utmost to preserve harmony between the army and the bourgeoisie.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TENT OF THE ADVENTURERS.

WHILE all these precautions for the public safety were being taken by Coligny, on whom rested the whole responsibility of the defense of the city, our

adventurers (ready also to fight in the same cause, because Coligny had taken them into his pay) waited patiently for the first signal of trumpet or drum, and meanwhile had pitched their tent about one hundred feet from the Porte d'Isle, on a vacant space in front of the Cordeliers.

They were now all assembled, and regulating their accounts.

The pecuniary affairs of the community were thus in good condition, and forty golden crowns had been carefully counted and put in the cash box.

Just as Maldent finished counting the last crown, a shadow thrown on the canvas indicated that some opaque body had been interposed between them and the light. Instinctively Procope extended his hand toward the gold, while Maldent, more rapid, covered it with his hat. Yvonnet turned round, and saw in the door-way the same young man who had wished to buy his horse. Quickly as Maldent had covered the gold, the stranger had seen it.

"Ah!" said he, "you are rich. I fear I come at a bad time. You will be hard to do business with."

"That depends on what the business is," said Procope.

"If there be anything to be gained," said Pilletrousse.

"Or any fighting," said Malemort.

"As long as it is not to attack a church or convent, I am ready," said Lactance.

"I shall like it best if it prove a moonlight expedition," said Fracasso.

Yvonnet said nothing, and the Scharfensteins were absorbed in their cookery. The stranger smiled. "It is a serious business," said he. "There will be plenty of fighting, and I propose to offer a reward which I trust will satisfy every one. Let all religious scruples be laid at rest; it concerns neither church nor convent, and we shall act at night, although I confess I should prefer a dark night to a moonlight one."

"Well, then," said Procope, who was generally the speaker, "let us hear your proposal, and judge if it be agreeable."

"You must promise to follow me, whether it be in a nocturnal expedition or a fight in broad daylight."

"To do what?"

"To attack the person whom I shall attack, to surround and kill him."

"And if he surrenders?"

"I warn you beforehand that I shall show no mercy."

"Peste! then it is a deadly hatred!"

"Just so."

"Good," said Malemort, rubbing his hands.

"But," said Maldent, "if the ransom were good—"

"I will provide for that."

"Then you buy him of us, dead or living?"

"Right again."

"How much for the dead, and how much for the living?"

"The same price."

"And yet it seems to me that a living man is worth more than a dead one."

"No; for I should only buy the living man that he might become a dead one."

"Well, how much will you give?"

"One moment, Procope," said Yvonnet, "until Monsieur de Waldeck has told us who the person is."

The stranger started. "You have pronounced a name—"

"Which is yours, monsieur," replied Yvonnet.

The stranger frowned. "How do you know me?" he said.

"Shall I tell you? Do you remember the Chateau du Parc?"

Waldeck turned pale.

"Do you remember the forest of St. Pol-sur-Ternoise?"

"It is just because I do that I come here to make you this proposal."

"Then it is the duke, Emmanuel Philibert, whom you want us to kill?" said Yvonnet.

"Peste! the Duke of Savoy?" cried Procope.

"You see it was necessary to explain," said Yvonnet.

"And why not kill the Duke of Savoy?" cried Malemort.

"I do not say no."

"He is our enemy, since we are engaged to Monsieur de Coligny, and I would as soon kill him as any one else."

"You are quite right, Malemort, only he would be dearer than another."

"Much dearer," said Maldent.

"Besides, it is risking one's soul," said Lactance.

"Oh! never mind all that. What is the price?" said Pilletrousse.

"Yes, that is the point," said Waldeck.

"Well, what do you say to five hundred golden crowns; one hundred on account, and the rest when the thing is done?"

Procope shook his head. "It will not do," said he.

"I am sorry for that," replied Waldeck, "for I tell you I can give no more; it is all I have, not a carolus more. If you refuse me, I must treat elsewhere."

The adventurers looked at each other. "Well, reflect," said Waldeck. "I know you and you know me. We live in the same town and can easily find each other." So saying, he bowed slightly and left them.

"Shall we recall him?" said Procope.

"Dame!" said Maldent, "five hundred golden crowns are not found every day."

"And then," said Yvonnet, "if it be really all he has, no one can give more than he has."

"My brother," said Lactance, "the lives of princes are under the direct guardianship of Heaven, and it is risking your souls to attack them. We should not do it unless for a sum sufficient to buy indulgences for each of us, whether we succeed or fail, for the intention is everything."

"It is true; it is worth more than he offers," said Pilletrousse.

"I vote that we accept," said Yvonnet.

"Yes," cried Malemort.

"There is no hurry," said Maldent.

"But if he goes to others?"

"Let us accept and fight," growled Malemort.

"Let us accept," joined in the Scharfensteins, who entered at that moment with their roast beef.

"Who will run after him?"

"I," said Malemort.

But just as he was about to do so, he heard firing by the Faubourg d'Isle, which was a directly contrary direction to that taken by M. de Waldeck.

"Oh, they are fighting in the Faubourg d'Isle," said Yvonnet. "I must go and look after Gudule."

"But the business?" said Procope.

"I leave it to you to settle." And he rushed after Malemort.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BATTLE.

THE reader doubtless remembers that the admiral had commanded a sortie toward evening, to burn the houses along the exterior boulevards, which had sheltered the Spaniards. This order had been given to MM. de Theligny, De Garnac and De Lugarches.

Consequently, at six o'clock they assembled one hundred soldiers and one hundred and twenty bourgeois, led by Guillaume and Jean Peuquoy. The two hundred and twenty men were to attack two thousand. About thirty feet from the old wall the road forked, one branch leading to Guise and the other to La Fere, and on each of these roads lay the houses which were to be destroyed.

The little band had therefore to divide, one going to the right and the other to the left, one of the Peuquoy's going with each as a guide. Quiet and rapid as had been their movements, they had been observed, and at the opening of each street they found a body of Spaniards double their own number, and from every window death was prepared to be hurled upon them. Such, however, was the impetuosity of the attack, that the Spaniards were driven back, and that, in spite of the fire from the windows, they managed to enter five or six houses. Malemort was one of the first who entered, and although ignorant of the motive of the sortie, he, unnoticed by the rest, piled up wood in the lower part of the house, and having set fire to it, ascended the staircase.

The Spaniards soon discovered, from the smoke which issued from the houses, what had been the object of the attack. They rallied again, and fell with their vastly superior numbers upon the little troop, who, however, had already accomplished a part of their errand, for the flames were rising from several houses.

We may remember that Yvonnet had gone to calm

the fears of Gudule, who was in great terror, as both her father and uncle were out. He climbed to the top of the house, curious to see what was going on, and, followed like a shadow by Gudule, he could hear the clash of the arms, and see the smoke issuing from the houses, and amid it human beings moving about in terror. They could see men jumping out of the windows, and others trying to escape by the roofs. Soon they distinctly saw Malemort (recognizable by the linen bandages on his face) pursuing a Spaniard over the roof. Arrived at the edge of the roof, the fugitive, seeing that he could fly no further, turned, determined to sell his life dearly. The struggle commenced, when suddenly the ground on which it was taking place gave way, and the flames burst through. One man disappeared, but the other was seen to cling to a beam and then jump into the *Somme*.

Soon they saw a head appear, then two arms, and then a body swimming toward the wall of the town. From the direction he was taking it must be Malemort, and both Yvonnet and Gudule descended rapidly and ran toward the place where he seemed likely to land, and indeed they arrived just in time to draw him from the water, half burned and nearly drowned, and to receive him fainting in their arms.

He, however, got off better than many of his companions, who were forced to retreat in disorder, leaving thirty soldiers and twenty bourgeois dead behind them. And indeed the enemy nearly got into the town *pêle-mêle* with those whom they pursued, and were repulsed with great difficulty by a party of

men hastily gathered together. It was no easy task to close the gates, for the enemy opposed it furiously; but at the head of the troops were the Scharfensteins, and joining their forces, they did such good service that the task was soon accomplished.

Then a cry arose, "To the walls! to the walls!" Two incomplete embrasures, in which cannon were intended to be placed, were in course of construction in the walls, and the assailants, repulsed from the gates, had noticed the works, and were trying to enter through them and carry the town by a *coup de main*. The combat was fierce, when Heinrich Scharfenstein, seizing an immense block of stone which rested on the wall, hurled it on the front rank of the Spaniards, destroying every one with whom it came in contact.

At the other breach Frantz did wonders, and was soon joined by Malemort, who followed the now flying Spaniards with the greatest impetuosity. He was soon knocked down, however, and would have been killed but for Frantz, who cut open with his long sword the head of the Spaniard who was about to put an end to Malemort's life with his dagger. Then seizing Malemort by the foot, he dragged him back to the breach and pulled him in, quite insensible.

The admiral now appeared with a little band of arquebusiers, who kept up so steady a fire as quickly to disperse the assailants.

The loss had been great, and the faubourg had nearly been taken by assault, and many officers begged Coligny to abandon this point, which had

already cost them so dear; but the admiral refused, declaring this faubourg to be of the greatest importance.

He gave orders to profit by the darkness to repair the breaches, and to put all things in order once more. The Jacobins, whose dark dress made them less conspicuous, undertook this business, while the arquebusiers watched over the ramparts, and sentinels were placed at every twenty feet along the line.

This was a sad night for Saint Quentin, the night on which they had to mourn their first killed. Many of the inhabitants abandoned this faubourg, which seemed destined to be the scene of the fiercest struggles, and among others Guillaume Peuquoy and his daughter, Gudule, to whom their uncle Jean had offered the shelter of his house. Gudule constantly looked back, and was consoled to see that Yvonnet was following them at a short distance.

No sooner did they reach the house, than Gudule, pleading fatigue, asked to be shown to her room, and was delighted to find that a little pavilion in the corner of the garden had been assigned to her father and herself, and that a ladder ten feet long would reach the window.

It was true that only a thin partition separated her room from that of her father, and that the sound of voices in her room might awaken suspicion. Consequently, if the lovers met there they would have to remain mute, but if Yvonnet could not come to the room, Gudule might descend to him.

While she was reflecting, she saw a shadow glide

along the garden, for Yvonnet also was reconnoitering. A few words sufficed for explanation, and before her father's heavy step was heard on the staircase all had been arranged for the following night. Gudule was ready to close her window, and Yvonnet to disappear down the Rue St. Jean.

CHAPTER XXIV.

M. DE THELIGNY.

DAYLIGHT found the admiral once more on the ramparts, for, far from being downcast by the check of the night before, Gaspard de Coligny had decided on making a new attempt. He hoped that the enemy knew of the help that had arrived, but not of its insignificant numbers, and that the Duke Emmanuel would thus be led to attempt a regular siege instead of a *coup de main*. Now, a regular siege would give them a fortnight's, or perhaps even a month's respite, during which the constable would make some attempts on his side, or the king would be able to send aid. He therefore called to him the lieutenant, M. de Theligny.

Coligny led him to the parapet of the tower, and said: "Monsieur de Theligny, do you see that detachment of Spanish yonder?"

Theligny replied that he saw perfectly.

"Well, it appears to me easy to surprise them with

thirty or forty men. Have out, then, that number of your company, put at their head a sure man, and let them make the attempt."

"But, Monsieur de Coligny, can I not be the sure man? I can answer for my officers, but still more for myself."

"My dear Theligny," replied the admiral, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder, "men of your stamp are rare, and must not be risked in small skirmishes. Give me your word that you will not command this sortie, or, fatigued as I am, I shall remain here on the ramparts."

"Monsieur de Coligny, if such be your real wish, go and repose, leave the care of this enterprise to me. I promise you not to leave the town."

"I rely on your word, monsieur. I shall not return to the governor's house, which is too far off, but go to Monsieur de Garnac's, throw myself on a bed, and sleep for an hour or two. There you will find me."

"Sleep tranquilly, monsieur. I will watch."

No sooner was the admiral gone, than Theligny, turning to an ensign, said: "I want forty volunteers from the company of the dauphin."

"They will be here immediately, lieutenant."

"How so?"

"A man who overheard the words of Monsieur de Coligny ran off at once and gave the order."

"And who is he who executes orders before they are given?"

"Ma foi! lieutenant," said the ensign, laughing,

"he looked more like a demon than a man. Half of his face was covered with a bloody bandage, his hair was burned, his cuirass broken in, and his clothes in tatters."

"Ah! I know him. You are right. He is more a demon than a man."

"And see, here he comes, lieutenant;" and he pointed to a man coming at full gallop from the Porte d'Isle. It was Malemort, who, half dead as he was, was quite ready for another sortie. Behind him came about forty men on horseback. As the sole recompense for his activity, Malemort asked leave to join the expedition, declaring that, if that were not allowed, he would make a sally on his own account. Theligny granted his request, charging him only not to separate from his men, but to fight with them.

Malemort promised all, but scarcely were they out of the gate than, leaving the little troop, who were winding quietly along a road bordered with trees, he rushed across the open country with loud cries.

Meanwhile, the admiral had gone to M. de Garnac's, as he had said, but in spite of his fatigue he was too anxious to sleep, and in about half an hour he rose, fancying he heard cries from the ramparts, and went out. He had scarcely taken twenty steps when he saw MM. de Lugarches and De Garnac coming toward him with a frightened air.

"Ah!" said M. de Garnac, "you know already, then?"

"I know nothing, but I was too anxious to sleep, and, hearing cries, I came out."

"Come, then." And the two officers quickly remounted the rampart with the admiral.

The premature arrival of Malemort had given the alarm, and when the officers and soldiers sent by Theligny arrived, thinking to surprise the enemy, they found about double their own number of men on horseback prepared to receive them. At this sight they faltered, some turned round and fled, the most cowardly abandoning the bravest, who were engaged with numbers far too overwhelming for them to contend long against without help. Theligny, forgetting his promise, and armed only with his sword, jumped on his horse and rode as quickly as possible, calling on those who had fled to return with him. Some obeyed him, and with eight or ten men he rushed to the rescue. Soon after about a third of the little command returned flying, but M. de Theligny was not with them. They knew nothing more of him than that they had seen him engage the Spanish and fall immediately after, covered with wounds. One soldier declared that he believed him to be still alive, for that he had seen a movement in his body as he galloped past. On this feeble hope, Coligny gave orders for a company to go and seek for him, when a kind of Goliath, advancing, said: "Pardon, Meinheer Admiral, but it will not need a company to seek for this poor devil of a lieutenant. I will go, if you please, with my nephew Frantz, and bring him dead or alive."

The admiral recognized Heinrich Scharfenstein, a few steps behind whom stood Frantz.

"Well, I accept your offer, my brave fellows," said he. "What do you ask for doing it?"

"A horse for each of us."

"But I do not mean that."

"I also want two men to ride encroupe behind us."

"Very well, but after?"

"That is all, only we want two strong horses and two thin men."

"You shall choose for yourself."

"Good."

"But the reward?"

"Oh, that is Procope's affair."

"I do not want Procope to settle it. I promise fifty crowns for Theligny living, or twenty-five for him dead."

"Oh, oh!" laughed Heinrich.

"Well, then, start without losing time."

"Immediately, admiral."

And Heinrich set off to select his horses, which he chose strong and vigorous. Then, to his great joy, he saw Lactance and Fracasso approaching, and chose them at once for companions, and started, taking all the precautions which Malemort had disregarded. Great interest was excited by this expedition to recover the body of Theligny, for all believed him to be dead.

In a short time the discharge of eight or ten arquebuses was heard. All trembled; but almost immediately after Frantz reappeared on foot, carrying two

men in his arms. Behind him one man on horseback, the other horse having doubtless been killed, and Fracasso and Lactance followed on foot.

Eight or ten Spaniards followed, but Heinrich charged among them every instant, while the others fired with a precision of aim which laid a Spaniard low each time.

A cry of joy and admiration burst forth when Frantz advanced, bearing in his arms two bodies, as a nurse might have carried two babies.

He laid one of them down at the feet of the admiral, saying, "There is your man, and he is not dead."

"And who is the other?"

"Oh, it is only Malemort. He will soon be all right. I believe he is the devil, and can not be killed."

At that moment, amidst the acclamations of all the lookers-on, the three others came up.

Theligny was not dead, although pierced with three balls and six sword-thrusts, which were easy to see, as the Spaniards, believing him dead, had stripped him quite naked and left him. He was carried at once to M. de Garnac's, and laid on the bed which the admiral had quitted a short time before. Scarcely was he laid down when he opened his eyes and recognized the admiral.

"A doctor, a doctor!" cried Coligny.

But Theligny extended his hand. "Thanks, monsieur," said he. "God permits a little time only to ask your pardon for having disobeyed you—"

The admiral stopped him.

"Ah! my dear Monsieur Theligny," said he, "do not ask pardon of me. If you disobeyed me it was through excess of zeal, but if you are as bad as you believe yourself, ask pardon of God."

"Ah! monsieur, I do; but still, in disobeying you, I committed a grave fault against discipline. Pardon me, therefore, that I may die in peace."

M. de Coligny felt the tears rise to his eyes at these words of the young officer.

"Since you wish it absolutely, I forgive you for a fault of which every brave soldier would be proud, and if that alone torments you, die happily and tranquilly."

And he pressed his lips to the forehead of the dying man. He, making a great effort, raised himself a little, murmured, "I thank you," and fell back with a sigh. It was his last.

"Gentlemen," said Coligny, "we have lost a brave comrade. May God grant to all of us a similar death."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MESSENGER.

HOWEVER well fought these two small actions had been, they had still been defeats, and showed the admiral their absolute need of prompt assistance, surrounded as they were by a numerous and vigilant

army. He therefore resolved, before the English army should arrive and hem them in completely, to send messengers to his uncle the constable, and beg him for aid.

He therefore called Maldent and Yvonnet, and as he felt sure that the constable would be either at Ham or at La Fere, he sent one to each place. He begged the constable to send them re-enforcements, which were to enter by the still unoccupied side, while Coligny would make a sortie on the other side in order to occupy the enemy.

Yvonnet went to La Fere and Maldent to Ham. But it is Yvonnet whom we shall principally follow, as it was he who found the constable.

At three o'clock in the morning he knocked at the gate of the city, which they obstinately refused to open until they learned that it was a messenger from Saint Quentin. The orders were positive to admit any one from thence at once, and bring him to the constable whatever hour it might be. Yvonnet found the constable in bed, with his sword under his pillow and his armor on a chair by his side.

When he heard the messenger announced he raised himself on his elbow, and said, "Come near, fellow."

It not being the time to be susceptible, Yvonnet advanced.

"Nearer," said the constable; "I like to see to whom I am talking."

Yvonnet came close to the bed.

"Here I am, monseigneur," said he.

The constable took his lamp and stared at Yvon-

net. "I have seen the fellow somewhere before," said he. "Do not give me the trouble of thinking, but tell me where it was. You must remember."

"And why should I remember better than you, monseigneur?" said Yvonnet.

"Because you see once in your life, by some chance, a constable of France, while I see every day numbers of fellows like you."

"That is true, monseigneur. Well, I saw you at court."

"What! do you go to court?"

"I was there on the day when I had the honor of seeing you," replied Yvonnet, politely.

"Hum! yes, I remember. You were there with a young officer sent to the king by my nephew."

"Yes, with Monsieur de Theligny."

"Just so. Is all going well at Saint Quentin?"

"On the contrary, monseigneur, all is going badly."

"How? take care what you are saying, fellow!"

"The day before yesterday we made a sortie, and about sixty men were disabled. Yesterday, in trying to surprise a post of Spaniards, we lost fifteen men of the company of the dauphin, and their lieutenant, Monsieur de Theligny."

"What! Theligny killed, after going through so many battles?"

"And here is a letter from Monsieur de Coligny, asking for immediate aid."

"Why did you not give it to me before?" cried the constable, snatching it from his hands.

“ ‘I will hold the Faubourg d’Isle as long as I can,’ ” wrote the admiral. “And he will do well. Mordieu! let some one fetch me Monsieur Dandelot. ‘For from its heights artillery can sweep the whole length of the rampart of Remicourt, from the Tour a l’Eau to the Tour Rouge.’ Let them call the Marshal Saint Andre. ‘But to defend this place, and all the other menaced points, I should require at least two thousand men more, having really but five or six hundred under my command.’ Morbleu! I will send him four thousand. Bring here the Duc d’Enghien. Why should they sleep when I am awake? ‘I have but sixteen pieces of cannon and only forty artillerymen, fifty or sixty arquebusiers, ammunition for a fortnight, and provisions for three weeks.’ What! can all this be true?”

“The exact truth, monseigneur,” replied Yvonnet.

“How do the bourgeois behave?” asked the constable.

“Wonderfully well.”

“So they ought.

“Even the monks have armed.”

“The hypocrites! Do they fight?”

“Like lions. As for the women—”

“Oh, of course, they weep and tremble, that is all they can do.”

“On the contrary, monseigneur, they encourage the combatants, they tend the wounded, they bury the dead.”

“The jades!”

At that moment the door opened, and a gentleman,

fully armed, excepting that he had only a velvet cap on his head, appeared at the door.

"Ah! come here, Monsieur Dandelot," said the constable. "Here is your brother crying out from Saint Quentin as though he were about to be murdered."

"Monseigneur," replied Monsieur Dandelot, "if my brother cries out, I feel sure that you know enough of him to be convinced that it is not through fear."

"Yes, morbleu! and that is what frightens me. Therefore I sent for you and for the Marshal de Saint Andre."

"Here I am, monseigneur," said the marshal, appearing at the door.

"Good, marshal. And Monsieur d'Enghien, who does not come—"

"Pardon me," said the duke, entering in his turn, "here I am."

"The question is, gentlemen," said the constable, "how to send help to poor Coligny, who has fifty thousand men against him, unless fear makes him see double."

The three officers smiled.

"If my brother says fifty thousand, it is fifty thousand," said Dandelot.

"And even rather sixty thousand than fifty thousand," said the marshal.

"So say I," said the Duc d'Enghien.

"Well, are you ready to risk something to help him?"

"I am ready to risk my life," said Dandelot.

"And we also," cried the others.

"Then all goes well. But, morbleu, what is that noise in the ante-chamber?"

An officer opened the door, and said:

"Monseigneur, they have arrested a man at the gates of Ham."

"Let him be taken to prison."

"We think he is a soldier disguised as a peasant."

"Let him be hung."

"But he says that he comes from the admiral."

"Has he a letter or safe-conduct?"

"No; that is what makes us think he is a spy."

"Let him be broken on the wheel."

"One moment," cried a voice outside. "People can not be treated like that." And after a sound of struggle, a man rushed in.

"It is Maldent!" cried Yvonnet.

"And who is Maldent?"

"The admiral's second messenger, who was sent to Ham."

It was indeed Maldent, who, having missed the constable at Ham, had returned by La Fere to rejoin Yvonnet. How Maldent, who had left in military dress, and with a letter from the admiral, arrived in the dress of a peasant and without a letter, we shall find out in one of the following chapters.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MALDENT.

Our readers must not be astonished if we follow, with an exactitude belonging rather to the province of the historian than of the novelist, all the details of the glorious siege of Saint Quentin, equally glorious for those who besieged and for those who were within the walls.

During the night which followed the departure of Yvonnet and Maldent, the admiral was told that the sentinels on guard at the faubourg fancied they heard the sound of mining. Coligny hurried to the spot, lay down on the rampart, with his ear to the ground, and listened.

"It is not mining," said he, on rising; "it is the rolling of cannon wheels. The enemy are bringing their guns near."

The officers looked at each other, then Jarnac, advancing, said: "Monsieur, you know that every one thinks the faubourg is not tenable."

The admiral smiled. "I think so, also," said he, "and yet you see we have held it for five days. If I had given it up when you urged me, it would have been during those five days in the hands of the Spaniards, and all that remains to do, in order to enter the city on that side, would be finished now. Let us not forget, gentlemen, that every day we gain is important to us."

"Then your opinion, monseigneur—"

"Is that we have done all that was possible to do on this side, and that we must now devote our strength and energy to other quarters."

The officers bowed in sign of acquiescence.

"At day-break," continued Coligny, "the Spanish guns will be up, and the firing will commence, and by that time all that we have here of artillery, ammunition, and tools, must be taken into the city. Part of our men will occupy themselves with that task, and the rest will fill the houses with fagots, and set fire to them. I will watch over the retreat, and have the bridges cut down behind our soldiers."

Then, seeing the dismayed look of those to whom the houses belonged: "My friends," said he, "if we spared your houses, the Spaniards would destroy them, and would use the wood and stone for their works. Sacrifice them yourselves, therefore, for the good of your country. I charge you with the task of setting fire to them."

The inhabitants whispered together for a few minutes, and then one of them, advancing, said: "Monsieur de Coligny, I am Guillaume Peuquoy. You may see my house from here. It is the largest in the place. I promise to set fire to mine, and my neighbors and friends will do the same by theirs."

"Is that true, my brave fellows?"

"If it be for the good of the king and the country."

"If we can hold out another fortnight, we shall save France."

"And you think it necessary to burn our houses?"

"I do."

"And if we do you will hold out?"

"I promise, my friends, to do everything that a gentleman, devoted to his king and his country, can do. Whoever talks of surrendering shall be thrown over the walls, and if I speak of it, do as much for me."

"Good, monseigneur! When you tell us to burn our houses we will."

"But," said a voice, "I trust you will spare the Abbey of Saint Quentin."

The admiral turned toward the speaker, and recognized Lactance.

"That least of all," replied the admiral. "From the roof of that abbey one can overlook the whole rampart of Remicourt, and cannon placed there would render the defense of that rampart impossible." Lactance sighed, and raised his eyes to heaven.

"Besides," continued Coligny, "Saint Quentin is the protector of the city, and would not desire his abbey to be an injury to it."

He then ordered the men to begin moving the various things, and to pile the wood in the houses. All worked with so much good will that by two o'clock in the morning there remained there only the necessary number of arquebusiers to make the enemy think it defended, and the men who stood with torches in their hands ready to set fire to the houses.

At day-break, as the admiral had foreseen, the

Spaniards fired their first volley. This was the signal agreed on for setting fire to the houses. No one hesitated; each heroically applying his torch, and in a few minutes a cloud of smoke arose which soon gave place to flame. The whole faubourg was burning, with the exception of the abbey, which escaped as by a miracle.

The admiral, after watching the flames for some time, went home to breakfast and took some repose, having eaten nothing since the evening before, and having been up all night. Just as he sat down it was announced to him that one of the messengers whom he had sent to the constable had returned and asked to speak to him.

It was Yvonnet who had come to announce to the admiral that help would arrive on the morrow, led by his brother, M. Dandelot, and by the Duc d'Eng-hien. It would consist of four thousand men, and Maldent had remained to serve as a guide to them.

All that day (the 7th August) passed without the enemy making any hostile demonstration. They seemed confining themselves to a simple blockade. Doubtless they were waiting the arrival of the English army. In the evening the sentinels remarked some movement on the side of the Faubourg d'Isle. The Spaniards of Carondelet and those of Romeron, profiting by the decline of the fire, began to enter the faubourg and approach the town. All the surveillance, therefore, was concentrated at that side.

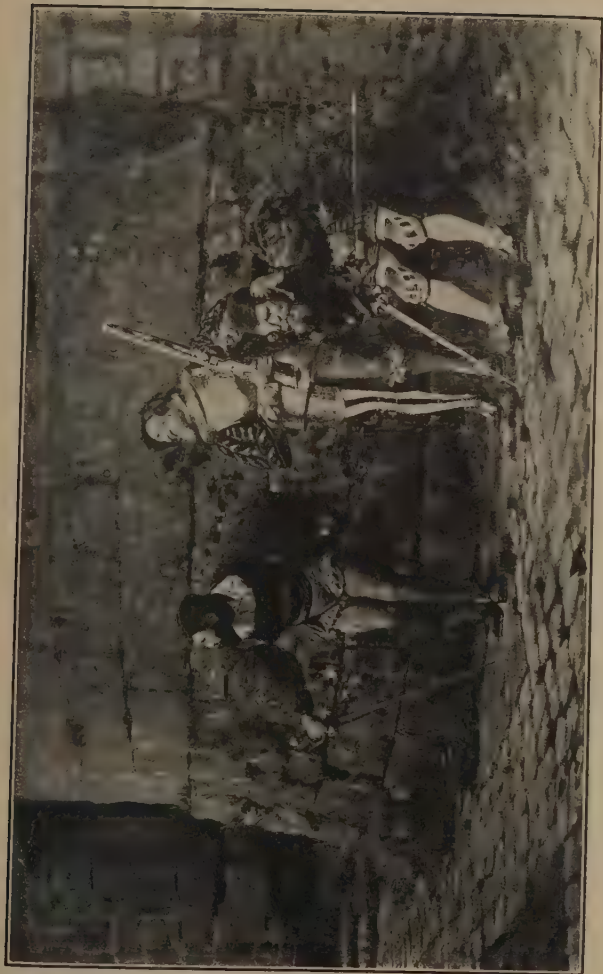
At ten o'clock the admiral called together, at his house, all the principal officers of the garrison, and

announced to them that he expected re-enforcements that night. They must, therefore, silently and secretly man the walls, so as to be ready to give aid if necessary.

The side where Jean Peuquoy's house stood was left almost solitary, for no attack was apprehended on that quarter. Therefore, about eleven o'clock, in one of those dark nights so blessed by lovers who want to meet, and by generals planning a surprise, Yvonnet, followed by Heinrich and Frantz, all three armed to the teeth, advanced cautiously along the Rue de la Rosiere and the Rue Saint Jean, in order to reach the rampart of the *vieux marché*.

In spite of their formidable appearance, however, this group had no hostile intentions, but Yvonnet had asked the Scharfensteins to accompany him on his love expedition, sure of safety when with them; and they, who entertained a great friendship for him, and always listened with great respect to all his stories and adventures, went willingly with him whenever he asked them. Neither were they inconvenient companions, for they were always ready to close both eyes and keep them shut as long as was necessary. Another advantage was, that to reach the window of Gudule's room a ladder had been necessary, but Yvonnet found it more simple to mount on the shoulders of his two friends, which did just as well.

Yvonnet had a collection of signals and signs by which he announced his presence to his mistress; but that evening there was no need of signals, for Gudule



Yvonnet, followed by Heinrich and Frantz, all armed to the teeth, advanced cautiously along the Rue de la Rosiere. Page 224.

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was at her window waiting, only, seeing three men arrive instead of one, she withdrew. But Yvonnet advanced alone, and she, reassured once more, made her appearance.

A few words sufficed to explain to Gudule the danger which a soldier in a besieged city would incur if he should be seen running about with a ladder on his back. The patrol would be sure to think that he was about to communicate with the besiegers. He would then be taken before an officer, perhaps even before the governor, and there explain the destination of the ladder, an explanation which might have proved disagreeable to Gudule. It was better, then, to bring friends of whose discretion he was sure.

"But how could these two friends replace a ladder?" she asked. Yvonnet immediately prepared to demonstrate this. At his request Heinrich leaned his back against the wall, Frantz then placed one foot on his uncle's outstretched hands, and another on his shoulder, then, having thus reached the height of the window, he seized Mlle. Gudule, who was looking curiously on, round the waist, and before she had time to make a movement, she found herself lifted from the room and placed on the ground beside Yvonnet. "There she is," said Frantz, laughing.

"Thanks," said Yvonnet, and he led Gudule to the darkest corner of the rampart. This was the circular top of the towers, which was protected by a parapet three feet high. The two Scharfensteins sat down on a stone bench near.

It is not our intention to repeat the conversation

of Yvonnet and Gudule. They were young, and in love; they had not seen each other for three days, and in a quarter of an hour much was said. We say a quarter of an hour, for at the end of that time Yvonnet laid his hand on the pretty mouth of his companion and listened. He fancied he heard a sound like the tread of many feet, and looking he seemed to see an immense black serpent at the foot of the wall.

But the night was so dark, and the sound so slight, that all might be an illusion. Besides, all at once the movement and the sound ceased. Yvonnet could see and hear nothing.

He stood for a few minutes with his arm round Gudule and his head passed between two of the battlements. Soon he fancied he saw the gigantic serpent raise its head against the wall. Then, like a hydra, another head, and then a third appeared.

At once he understood all, and telling Gudule to be silent, he took her in his arms and gave her to Frantz, who soon replaced her in the room. Then, running back, he arrived at the first ladder just as a Spaniard placed his foot on the parapet.

Thick as was the darkness, a kind of gleam was seen, then a cry resounded, and the Spaniard, struck by Yvonnet's sword fell backward.

The noise of his fall, however, was lost in that of the second ladder, crowded with men, and pushed backward by Heinrich's powerful arm.

Frantz had found a huge beam, and raising it above his head, had let it fall upon the third ladder,

which had broken in two, and ladder and men fell pell-mell into the fosse.

Yvonnet now cried loudly for help, and the two Scharfensteins, running to him, found him attacked by two or three Spaniards, who had gained a footing. One of them fell under the immense sword of Heinrich, another was felled by the club of Frantz, and the third hurled over the rampart.

Immediately after appeared Jean and Guillaume Peuquoy, roused by the cries, and soon after other aid arrived, and the attempt was a failure on the part of the Spaniards.

At the same instant, as if different attacks had been planned for the same time, the sound of thousands of arquebuses was heard from the opposite side.

The two attempts, that of the Spaniards to surprise the city, and that of Dandelot to assist it, had both failed.

We have seen how chance worked against the Spaniards; let us now hear how it defeated the French.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OF THE DOUBLE ADVANTAGE THAT THERE MAY BE IN
SPEAKING THE PATOIS OF PICARDY.

IT is now time that we should visit the tents of the besiegers. At the same time that Coligny and his officers were making the tour of the walls,

to see what was the state of the defenses, another equally important group was going round outside to find out the best mode of attack. This group was composed of Emmanuel Philibert, Count Egmont, Count Horn, Count Mansfeld, and the Dukes Eric and Ernest of Brunswick. Behind these came other officers, among whom was Scianca-Ferro.

By the orders of Emmanuel, Leona had remained at Cambray. The result of the examination had been that, sheltered by bad walls and with an insufficient garrison and artillery, the town could not hold out more than four or five days, and this message Emmanuel had sent to Philip, who was also at Cambray, which had been an additional reason for leaving Leona there, as it was probable that the generalissimo would have more than once to hold personal communication with his sovereign, as Cambray was but seven leagues from Saint Quentin, and each of these visits would probably give an opportunity of seeing Leona.

Emmanuel's first idea had been that the weak side of Saint Quentin was the Porte d'Isle, and that the slightest neglect on the part of the besieged would give them entrance there. He, therefore, leaving the other chiefs to encamp before the side of Remicourt, had pitched his tent opposite the faubourg on a little hill which overlooked the Somme, over which he had thrown a bridge, and all that vast space which was to be occupied by the English.

On the night of the 7th of August he had determined to risk an escalade. On the morning of the

6th, a peasant who had asked to see him was introduced into his tent. The man was the bearer of a letter that he had taken out of a military doublet, which he had found under his wife's bed.

The doublet belonged to Maldent, and the letter was one of those written by Coligny. Now, how did this doublet come to be under the bed of a peasant in the village of Savoy? That is what we must now relate. The destiny of states often depends upon small accidents.

After having left Yvonnet, Maldent had gone on his way. Arrived at Savoy, he had at the corner of a street run against a night patrol. To fly was impossible, he had been seen; besides, it would have excited suspicion, and horsemen would have easily overtaken him. He therefore glided into a doorway.

"Who goes there?" cried the voice.

Maldent knew the manners of Picardy, and that it was very rare for a peasant to lock a door. He lifted the latch, the door opened, and he walked in.

"Is it you, old man?" asked a woman's voice, in a strong Picard patois.

"Oh, yes, it is I," replied Maldent, in the same patois, for he was a native of Noyon.

"Oh," replied the woman, "I thought you were dead."

"Good; you see I am not," replied Maldent, locking the door and approaching the bed. However rapid had been his movements, one of the patrol had seen him, but without being able to tell precisely through what door he had disappeared. And as he

might be a spy, they were already knocking at the next house, a fact which showed Maldent that he had no time to lose. But not knowing the locality, he ran against a table covered with pots and glasses.

"What are you about?" cried the woman. "How can you be so stupid?"

Not wishing to be known as a stranger in the house, he thought the best plan was to take the place of the master of the house. So, slipping off his clothes, and hastily pushing them under the bed, he jumped into it.

A few minutes after, the patrol, who had found in the next house only an old woman of sixty and a little girl of nine or ten, knocked at the door of the cottage, determined to find the man who had disappeared so suddenly.

"Ah! what is that, Gossen?" cried the hostess.

"I do not know or care," replied he.

"But they will break down the door."

"Let them."

The door soon yielded to the blows of the soldiers, who entered, swearing and cursing. But as they spoke in Spanish Maldent spoke in Picard. The dialogue became confused, and the soldiers prepared to strike a light in order to judge better of the situation. This was the critical moment, so, while the soldiers struck a light, Maldent in a few words informed his hostess the truth. Her first feeling was hostile, and she cried out:

"Ah! you are not Gossen? Then get out of this at once."

"But," said Maldent, "I am Gossen, since I am in his bed."

This argument appeared unanswerable, for the woman, after casting a rapid glance at her new husband by the now lighted candle, murmured:

"One must not desire the death of the sinner," and turned her face to the wall. Maldent also profited by the light to look about him. He was in the house of a peasant apparently well off. There was an oak table, a walnut chest of drawers, curtains, and on a chair the Sunday clothes of the true Gossen lay ready for the morrow.

The soldiers also looked around them, but finding nothing to awaken their suspicion with regard to Maldent, began to converse more quietly among themselves. Maldent, who perfectly understood Spanish, heard all they said.

They wished to take him for a guide from Savoy to Callon. At last the chief, who spoke a little French, approached the bed and told Maldent to get up. Maldent shook his head.

"I can not," said he.

"How! can not?"

"No."

"And why not?"

"Because I have hurt my leg."

"Then we will give you a horse."

"Oh, no, I can not ride a horse; a donkey, if you like."

"You shall learn."

"Oh, no," cried Maldent, shaking his head again, "I can not ride on a horse."

"We will see that," said the Spaniard, approaching and raising his whip.

"Oh! yes, I will ride," cried Maldent, jumping out of bed and hopping about on one foot as though he had really hurt the other.

"Very good. Now dress quickly."

"Yes, but do not make such a noise, you will disturb my poor Catherine, who is not well." And as he spoke he drew the sheet over Catherine's head. This he did for a purpose of his own, for he intended to put on the clothes of the absent Gossen instead of his own, which were under the bed, and to take which would be sure to reawaken suspicion. As for Catherine, she did not look about her. All she cared about was to see her false husband make off as quickly as possible. Maldent, on his part, who feared every moment to see the true Gossen appear, made as much haste as possible, and then, taking the candle, on pretense of looking for his hat, he let it fall and put out the light.

"Adieu, Catherine," said he, "I must go." And he limped off, leaning on the arm of a soldier. There was a great job to get him on to the horse. Three men had to lift him on the saddle.

Once in the saddle, it was worse. As soon as the horse began to trot Maldent uttered lamentable cries, and pulled so hard at the bridle that the poor horse in his turn did all that he could to rid himself of so disagreeable a rider. At last, at the corner of

a street, one of the men gave the horse a cut with his whip, and Maldent, at the same time leaving the reins loose, the animal set off at a full gallop.

Maldent called loudly for help, but before any one could come up with him both horse and rider had disappeared. The comedy had been so well played that it was not till he was out of sight that the Spaniards began to perceive that they had been duped.

It was thus that Maldent had arrived at La Fere with a soldier's horse and a peasant's dress, and had nearly been hung for it.

Two hours after the departure of the false Gossen the real one arrived. He found the whole village in commotion, and his wife in tears.

She had recounted to every one how a thief had entered her house, and, pistol in hand, had forced her to give him Gossen's clothes, which, no doubt, he required for the purpose of baffling justice, as he must be a great criminal. However great the anger of Gossen was at losing his clothes, he was obliged to console his wife, who was in such grief. But at last the idea struck him of searching the clothes left in place of his own, to discover some clew to the robber. There he found the letter addressed to M. de Montmorency by the admiral, and hatred had whispered him to take it to Philibert Emmanuel, in the hope that the constable would think that he had been betrayed by the bearer of the letter. So, in spite of the remonstrances of his wife, who begged him not to trouble himself about it, he set off at day-break and took the letter to Emmanuel, who did

not scruple to open it, and thus discovered that aid had been applied for, and how it was proposed it should arrive. All day long he remained quiet, giving no signs of suspicion; but imagining that the admiral had doubtless dispatched more than one messenger, he sent out men to raise barricades across the roads from Savoy and Ham. Near them he placed in ambush his best arquebusiers.

That night passed over quietly, and then the duke supposed rightly that they would arrive on the following night.

But it was not enough to prevent aid from arriving. Emmanuel thought that, to aid the entrance of the succors, the whole garrison would be assembled at Ponthville, and that the other points would be left unguarded, particularly the rampart of the *vieux marché*, as all firing had ceased on that side for two days, and he had, therefore, ordered his men to attempt a surprise there.

We have seen what chance defeated that, but, in compensation, the ambush succeeded, most unfortunately for the poor besieged, from whom it took their last hope.

Three times did Dandelot attempt to pass through the wall of fire which separated him from the town, and three times he was repulsed. Nor could the besieged come to aid him. At last, decimated by the fire, they dispersed over the country, and Dandelot returned to the constable the next day with only five or six hundred men, and related his defeat.

The constable said that he would give the Span-

iards a lesson, and therefore decided to set off in person and with all his army—which, however, did not number a fifth of the enemy—and succor Saint Quentin.

It was a terrible blow to the besieged when they heard of the repulse of the promised re-enforcements. They were reduced to their own resources, and we know what they were.

Coligny called a council to explain to the mayor and chief magistrates the danger of their situation, and to concert fresh measures. Many people from the environs had, for fear of pillage, taken refuge in Saint Quentin, and among them were two gentlemen of noble birth, De Chaulaincourt and D'Ameroale. Coligny begged of them each to raise a banner and to enroll as many men as possible under their orders, to whom he promised a quarter's pay in advance. They consented, and before night had enrolled two hundred and twenty men tolerably well armed.

During the day they heard drums beating, and had perceived advancing from Cambray a new troop of men dressed in blue. This was the English army, twelve thousand strong, who had come to join the Duke of Savoy and to complete the blockade. It was commanded by Pembroke, Clinson and Grey.

They had with them twenty-five cannon—in itself double what the admiral had to distribute over the whole ramparts.

The inhabitants beheld this third army with dis-

may, but the admiral incited them to courage and hope.

The next thing was to find a way by which the constable might send them aid. They decided on the crossing of the Somme by the marsh of Grosnard. These marshes were very dangerous on account of their turf bogs and holes, and were thought impracticable, but some of the men said that with fifty men laden with fascines they would attempt that night to establish a passage ten feet wide through the marsh. Maldent was sent with them, and was the bearer of a letter to the constable describing the locality, and begging him to bring with him flat boats as he had but four small ones. If they succeeded in establishing the passage, Maldent would swim across the Somme and thus reach the constable, and if it were important to bring an answer would return in the same way.

At two o'clock in the morning the party returned with the intelligence that a way was traced out over which six men could pass abreast.

They had completed their work without molestation, the marsh having been represented to the Duke of Savoy as wholly impassable. Maldent had swum the river and was on his way to La Fere. A hope, although but a faint one, began to dawn upon the besieged.

By day-break the admiral was on the ramparts. From where he stood he could overlook the enemy's camp and see their works. They were advancing rapidly, and it was easy to see from the piles of fresh

earth that their pioneers were at work. The admiral sent for an excellent English engineer, called Lansfort, and asked him what he thought of the enemy's works. He was of opinion that it was the beginning of a mine, but consoled the admiral by telling him that he had himself commenced a counter-mine.

But the Spaniards were engaged on another work not less formidable; they had begun to cut trenches which were gradually approaching the town. They were three in number. One menaced the rampart of Remicourt, one fronted the Tour d'Eau, and the other the Tour Rouge. The admiral could not oppose them for want of men to make sorties. He had but six or seven hundred men, and could not muster more than forty arquebusiers. All that he could do was to repair the damage done by the Spaniards as fast as they did it. But soon even this became impossible, for the Spaniards unmasked a fresh battery in the course of the day, which swept the whole wall, and no men would venture on it for a long time, until at last, by promises of double pay, the admiral induced about one hundred men to work.

Meanwhile Maldent had arrived safe and sound at La Fere. And no sooner did the constable hear of his nephew's distress, and of the passage that had been opened for him, than he resolved to set off without delay. Consequently, an hour after Maldent's arrival he set off at the head of two thousand six hundred horse and four thousand foot, and marched toward Essigny le Grand, where he stopped. There, having arranged his army in order of battle, he sent

forward three officers to ascertain the position of the Spaniards and to report how far the advance posts were from the town, while he himself advanced as near as possible to the marsh—that is, to the little town of Guiois.

The three officers returned, confirming Maldent's report, and Maldent was immediately dispatched with a letter to Coligny, begging him to hold on, for that he should have aid as soon as possible, and telling him to keep a look-out for it. He accordingly doubled the sentinels on the side on which they would arrive, and got ready a large number of ladders, that some might climb the walls while others entered by the gates.

The constable had resolved to make his attempt openly and in daylight, as darkness had succeeded so badly the first time. He resolved now to trust to courage and open force. He therefore returned to La Fere, assembled all his men and fifteen pieces of cannon, and sent word to Saint Andre to join him early on the morning of the 10th.

After having delivered his message, Maldent returned to his comrades. He found all smiling and happy except Malemort, who was groaning piteously, for he felt that it would be impossible for him to join in the coming battle, and Maldent's announcement of the approach of the constable brought his despair to a climax.

It was supper time, and, thanks to the numerous resources, their table was certainly better furnished than that of the admiral. The wine, particularly,

was delicious, and they drank to the return of Maldent—to the recovery of Malemort—to the king—to the admiral—to Gudule. And then Maldent proposed the health of Catherine Gossen. Each proposed a toast but the Scharfensteins, who always drank more and talked less than any one else. At last they called on Heinrich for his toast.

“Well,” said he, “I propose the health of that virtuous young man who came to offer us five hundred crowns for that little affair you know.”

“Ah! yes—De Waldeck,” said Yvonnet. “But we have seen no more of him or his money.”

“Never mind,” replied Heinrich. “He has passed his word, and a German never breaks it. He will come, be sure.”

“I thank you for answering for me,” said a voice at the door.

All turned round.

“Gentlemen,” said De Waldeck, “here is the two hundred crowns in advance, and you belong to me body and soul to-morrow, or rather to-day, for it is one o’clock in the morning.

And taking a glass of wine which was filled for him, he also drank to the success of the little affair.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BATTLE OF SAINT LAURENT.

LET us return to the constable.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 10th, the troops of the Marshal Saint Andre joined those of the constable. They formed together a body of about nine hundred gendarmes, one thousand light horse, fifteen French and twenty-two German companies of infantry—in all about ten thousand men. It was at the head of this small army that the constable prepared to attack sixty thousand men.

The Marshal de Saint Andre had represented to him the danger he was about to incur, particularly with so active an enemy as the Duke of Savoy, but the constable replied:

“Corbleu! monsieur, you may trust to me to know what is for the good of the state. I learned long ago when to give battle and when to avoid it. Be easy about it.”

It was ten o'clock when they reached Gauchy; but they had time to overthrow two companies of six hundred men, who formed an advance guard, before they were perceived by the Duke of Savoy.

Arrived there, the French troops found themselves in view of the Spanish army, but the Somme and the marshes lay between them. The whole of the Spanish, English and Flemish army lay on the right

bank of the Somme, but the Faubourg d'Isle was kept only by Julien Romeron and Carondelet, and the two companies that had already been surprised. What the constable had now to do was to block into the faubourg the two Spanish captains, place six cannon in front of the path through the marsh—the only practicable passage—and then to send down to Saint Quentin as many men as were necessary, and retire, sacrificing some of his six cannon and perhaps one hundred men, who would have sufficed to guard this passage.

He blocked the companies, but entirely neglected the path, and ordered out the forty boats that he had brought with him. But then it was found that the wagons with the boats had been placed, not in front, but in the rear. Two hours were lost in bringing them up, and then the men rushed in so tumultuously that they were overloaded, and grounded in the mud.

Meanwhile, one of the prisoners taken in the morning had pointed out to the constable the tent of the Duke of Savoy, and he immediately ordered the gunners to fire upon it, and the movement which immediately took place around it showed that the balls had taken some effect.

However, the boats now began to ascend the stream, the soldiers burning as they went along resinous matter which created a thick smoke, which was the signal agreed on between him and Coligny. At the first notice of the arrival of the constable, Coligny had run to the ramparts, seen the boats filled with men, and had ordered a sortie through the postern Sainte Cath-

crine, which was destined to aid them on disembarking, and at the same time had a large number of ladders brought ready to facilitate their entering the town.

Just as he was giving his directions, Procope came to him, and reminding the admiral of the engagement between them, asked leave for the day, as the adventurers had a private enterprise in contemplation. It was according to agreement, and therefore the admiral had no reason for refusing. They therefore left the city with Waldeck at their head, fully armed, and with his visor lowered. Soon the boats reached the shore. But the same haste and disorder which had attended the embarking still prevailed, and without attending to the signs of those sent by the admiral to aid them, they rushed on shore and sunk up to the waist in the mud. Then a frightful tumult ensued. They pushed, some to the right and some to the left, some sinking deeper into the mud and some straying in the direction of the enemy's camp. Dandelot alone, with about four hundred men, followed the path marked out by the fascines, and obtained dry ground.

Coligny from where he stood beheld with despair the succors so long expected being diminished and lost, and called uselessly to the men who were struggling by hundreds in the marshes without any one being able to help them.

However, Dandelot rallied a few of them, and arrived at the postern with five hundred men, fifteen captains and a few gentlemen who had volunteered

to join the expedition. Four artillerymen followed. Next to the sight of his brother, Coligny said that their arrival gave him most pleasure, as he had none but bourgeois artillerymen, who, however brave, were not sufficiently experienced or skillful to be adequate to the wants of a besieged city.

De Waldeck waited quietly until the soldiers were disembarked, and then seized one of their boats, and, followed by his men, went down the river and landed in a little alder wood which extended itself along one of the banks. Arrived there, he gave each man a Spanish scarf, and ordered them to lie close and concealed and ready to obey orders.

His plan was easy to understand. Knowing the character of Emmanuel, he did not doubt that he would come out and give battle to the constable, and as uniforms were not worn at that time, he thought that his men might easily mix with his troops and surround him. Once surrounded, we knew what De Waldeck wanted.

Emmanuel had just left the table when they came to announce the arrival of the French army on the other side of the Somme, and his tent being on an eminence, he could see them distinctly. He could also see the arrival of Dandelot and his men, but they were out of gunshot; and, at the same time, a whistling was heard over his head, and a bullet, burying itself at his feet, covered him with sand and pebbles. Emmanuel rushed out of his tent and at that moment a ball passed right through it. To remain longer there was to expose himself to certain

death. He went out, ordering them to bring him his horse and arms, and went to a little chapel on a rising ground, whence he could see that the French army did not extend further than St. Lazare, and that that village itself was only guarded by a small body of cavalry. These observations made, he came down, armed himself rapidly under the porch of the little chapel, called to him the Counts Horn and Egmont, sent a messenger to the Duc Eric de Brunswick and to the Count de Mansfeld, to order them to watch the French and giving them a rendezvous at the quarters of the Marshal Binincourt. A quarter of an hour after he was at the appointed place himself. Messengers from the Duke of Brunswick and from the Count Mansfeld were already there with the information that the road to Rocroy was perfectly free, and that the extreme point of the French army did not reach Neuville. Emmanuel immediately ordered two thousand men to mount on horseback, and putting himself at their head, went along this road, where he ranged them to protect his infantry. All this was perfectly unseen by the French, and fifteen thousand were in position while the constable was still amusing himself with firing on the empty tent. All at once the Duc de Nevers, sent by the constable with the gendarme companies to scour the plain of Neuville, discovered that an immense body of troops, protected by the two thousand horse of the duke, was advancing from the other side and closing in on the army of the con-

stable in a half circle. He set off at full gallop to inform the constable what had happened.

The constable then called the Marshal Saint Andre and the other chiefs of his army, and announced to them that, content with having furnished Saint Quentin with the necessary re-enforcements, he would now retreat as quickly as possible. He therefore wished them all to rally their men and to begin their retreat, avoiding any engagement to which he was not forced.

The French began their retreat, and advanced rapidly but in good order toward the wood of Gusoz, which would afford them a shelter against a charge of cavalry. But it was too late before they reached it. They encountered the Spanish army drawn up in a vast circle. The constable halted, for the numeric superiority of the opposing army gave them no chance of reaching the wood. Then Emmanuel divided his army into three great bodies, intrusted the command of the right wing to Count Egmont and that of the left to the Duke of Brunswick, explained to them his plan, enjoined them to make no movement without his orders, and took command of the center himself. Between the two armies was all that mass of vivandieres, valets and rabble which attached themselves to all armies of the time. Emmanuel ordered his men to fire upon them, and the result was what he expected. A thousand men and women recoiled with loud cries on to the ranks of the constable, who tried to repulse them, which their terror rendered difficult.

Emmanuel saw the confusion into which the French ranks were thrown, and turning to Scianca-Ferro, cried:

"Let Count d'Egmont fall on the French rear guard with his cavalry."

Scianca-Ferro set off like lightning.

"Now, Duke Ernest," continued he, "while d'Egmont charges the rear guard you and your brother, with four thousand arquebusiers, attack the head of the column. The center is my business."

Emmanuel watched his two messengers to their respective destinations, and then, seeing a movement commence, drew his sword and cried:

"Sound the trumpets! The time has come!"

The Duc de Nevers, who commanded the left of the French army, had to sustain the attack of Count d'Egmont. Attacked in the flank, he turned and faced the enemy, but two accidents hampered his movements. A body of the camp followers, repulsed from the center of the enemy, rushed upon them like an avalanche, and at the same time a body of English light horse, in the pay of France, wheeled round and joined the Flemish cavalry, with whom they immediately returned and charged the troops of the duke. In spite of the valiant efforts of the duke, who did wonders that day, disorder began to manifest itself. Meanwhile, the Dukes of Brunswick, according to their orders, attacked the head of the French column just as it emerged on the road to Gibercourt. But they, being not subject to any evil chance, stood firm and continued their march, repulsing the arque-

busiers and thus giving time to the constable and the rest of the army to draw up in battle order in the vast plain which extends between Essigny le Grand, Montescourt and Gibercourt.

There, feeling that he could go no further, the constable halted again, like a boar forced to turn to bay, and, muttering his pater nosters, he re-formed his army in a square, with his cannon in front. They were surrounded and must either conquer or die. The old soldier did not fear death, and hoped to conquer. Indeed, the French infantry, on which the constable reckoned, showed themselves worthy of their reputation, sustaining the shock of the whole army, while the Germans in the French pay laid down their pikes and asked for quarter.

However, the constable held firm, and his infantry repulsed with incredible intrepidity the charge of the Flemish cavalry. Emmanuel then brought out his cannon to demolish this living rampart, and soon began to make a breach. Then putting himself at the head of a squadron, he charged like a simple captain. The shock was great and decisive. The constable, surrounded on all sides, defended himself with the courage of despair, repeating his prayers as usual, and giving a sword stroke with each, which overthrew a man. Emmanuel saw, recognized, and rode toward him, crying:

“Take him alive. It is the constable!”

He was but just in time, for the constable had received a wound with a pike; but Scianca-Ferro, hearing the duke's words, now placed himself before him

as a rampart, crying to him to surrender, as resistance was now useless.

The constable gave up his poniard, declaring that he would yield his sword only to the duke himself. Emmanuel advanced and received it.

The battle was now gained, but not over. They continued to fight for some time, and vast numbers of the French were killed. Among these was the Duc d'Enghien, the Vicomte de Turenne, and eight hundred gentlemen, who were left dead on the field. Among the prisoners were the Duc de Montpensier, the Marshal Saint Andre and the Duc de Bouillon.

The Duc de Nevers, the Prince de Conde and the eldest son of the constable got back to La Fere. Then the Sieur de Bordillon joined them, with him two pieces of cannon which had escaped capture at this great battle, in which France, out of eleven thousand men, lost six thousand killed, three thousand prisoners, sixty flags, and all the baggage, tents and provisions. There did not remain ten thousand men to keep the enemy out of Paris. Emmanuel gave his troops the order to regain the camp, and was himself accompanied by a few officers riding along the road from Costigny to Saint Lazare, when some men came out of the mill of Gauchy and mingled with the escort. For some time they went on in silence, but suddenly, just as they were passing a little wood whose thick shade redoubled the darkness, the duke's horse uttered a loud neigh, gave a leap, and fell. Then a noise like the clash of steel was heard, and a voice crying, "Down with the Duke Emmanuel!"

But scarcely were the words uttered when Scianca-Ferro, overturning friends and foes in his hurry, and crying out, "Here I come, brother Emmanuel!" rushed toward the duke. Emmanuel had no need of any encouragement, and, thrown from his horse as he was, had seized one of the aggressors and made a buckler of him. The horse also kicked furiously, and overturned another. Meanwhile Scianca-Ferro continued to cry, "Help for the duke!" And every gentleman rushed forward, striking at he knew not whom.

Suddenly they heard the gallop of about twenty horses, and he saw by the approaching lights that their riders bore torches. At this sight two men on horseback galloped off, while two others on foot rushed into the wood, and all resistance ceased. In a few seconds the torches lighted up this new battle-field. The first thought was for the duke. But his wounds were very slight, the person whom he held in his arms having received most of those intended for him, and being now perfectly unconscious from a blow of Scianca's club. As for the three men stretched on the ground, and who seemed dead or dying, no one knew them. He whom the duke held wore a helmet with the visor down. They unfastened it, and displayed the pale face of a young man about twenty-five. His red hair and beard were covered with blood, but the duke and Scianca both recognized him, and exchanged a glance: "Ah! serpent, it is you!" said Scianca. "See, Emmanuel, he has but fainted. Shall I put an end to him?"

But Emmanuel drew the unconscious man from the arms of his squire, and leaning him against a tree, laid his helmet by his side. "Gentlemen," said he, "God alone can judge between me and that young man, and He has declared for me. Scianca, I pray you let him live. The father was enough." Then, remounting his horse, "Gentlemen," said he, "I wish that the battle, fought to-day so gloriously for us, should be called the battle of Saint Laurent, in memory of the day on which it took place."

They then all returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW THE ADMIRAL RECEIVED THE NEWS OF THE BATTLE.

THE blow was terrible, and struck cruelly at the heart of France, while it rejoiced their great enemy, Philip the Second. The battle took place on the 10th, and on the 12th the king joined Emmanuel at the camp. The duke, who had yielded to the English army all the ground between the Somme and the Chapel d'Eparguemaille, had now pitched his camp in front of the rampart of Remicourt, where he determined to carry on the siege, if, contrary to all expectation, they continued to hold out after the news of the defeat. Philip reached the camp about twelve in the morning, and Emmanuel came outside

to receive him, and was going to kiss his hand, according to etiquette, but Philip cried, "No, cousin; I should rather kiss yours, who have gained for me so great and glorious a victory, which has cost us so little bloodshed." Indeed, the chroniclers of the time say that the Spanish lost only sixty-five men and the Flemings fifteen men, while the English were never called into action. As for the French corpses, they covered the whole plain between Essigny and Gibercourt. It was so pitiful a spectacle that Catherine de Laillier, mother of the Sieur de Gibercourt, had a field consecrated, and immense pits dug in it, to which she had the bodies brought for burial.

King Philip then reviewed his prisoners, and afterward they planted along the trench the French flags taken in the battle, and fired cannon as a sign of joy.

Let us now return to Saint Quentin.

The admiral had heard the firing all day in the direction of Gibercourt, but did not know the result of the battle. About one o'clock in the morning he was informed that three men had arrived with news. They were instantly admitted, and proved to be Yvonnet and the two Scharfensteins. Yvonnet was the spokesman, and told all he knew, namely, that the battle was lost, and that there was a large number killed and made prisoners. He knew no names, but had heard that the constable was wounded and taken prisoner. The admiral asked them how they came to mingle in the battle, of which there seemed no doubt, as Yvonnet had a wound in his left arm,

Heinrich a cut right across his face, while Frantz was lame from the kick of a horse, and begged them to keep the defeat secret as long as possible. The three then returned to their tent, where they found Malemort a prey to a frightful nightmare. He dreamed that he saw his friends fighting, but that, up to the waist in a bog, he could not free himself to join them. When they awoke him his distress was still greater, as he heard of all that had been passing without him.

At five in the evening Maldent returned. He had been left for dead, but having only fainted, had recovered. He could tell no more about the battle than the others. The next night Pilletrousse arrived. He was one of those who had escaped into the wood, and as he spoke good Spanish and wore a Spanish scarf, he had joined himself to a band sent by Emmanuel to seek among the dead for the Duc de Nevers, who had exposed himself so much that every one felt sure that he must be dead, and they had wandered about all day, turning over the dead bodies.

It may be imagined that they did not leave them without plundering them, so that Pilletrousse returned without a wound, and with his pockets full. He was taken to the admiral, and furnished him with full particulars as to the dead and the prisoners.

About day-break, some one came to tell the Jacobins that one of their number was being brought home dead on a bier by two peasants. The Spaniards had not felt any wish to stop a dead body from entering the town, and had allowed it to pass. The

worthy brothers surrounded the bier, wondering who could be lying there, when they heard a voice from the coffin crying, "It is I, dear brothers, your unworthy captain, Lactance. Open quickly, for I stifle." Some were greatly terrified, but others, more brave, understood that it had been a ruse to re-enter the town, and they opened it at once. Lactance jumped out, knelt down, and gave thanks for his return, and then related to them how, after an unlucky expedition, he had taken refuge with some worthy peasants, but they, fearing discovery by the Spaniards, God had inspired him with the idea of being placed in a coffin and brought in as a dead body. The good monks, glad to recover their captain, willingly gave two crowns to the bearers. But from Lactance, who had received no recommendation to secrecy, the news of the defeat spread through the convent, and from the convent to the town. About eleven the next morning Proc  pe was announced to the admiral. He brought a letter from the constable. How this happened we will relate. Proc  pe had presented himself at the Spanish camp, representing himself as servant to the constable, and asking to be allowed to join his master, which was granted. He made the constable understand by a glance that he had something to say to him, and as soon as all others were dismissed and they were alone, "Well, fellow," cried he, "have you anything to say to me? Be quick, or I will give you up to the duke as a spy, and he will hang you!"

Then Proc  pe related a long story. How the ad-

miral, having full confidence in him, had sent him to the constable to get news, and that he might confide to him a message, verbal or written, and he would find means to re-enter the city. M. de Montmorency had no message but to beg his nephew to hold out as long as possible.

"Give me the message in writing," said Procope.

"But, fellow, if they catch you with such a letter do you know what will happen to you?"

"I shall be hung," said Procope. "But never fear, I shall not let myself be taken."

Reflecting that after all it was Procope's business and not his, the constable wrote the letter, which Procope concealed within the lining of his doublet. He then furnished up the constable's helmet, cuirass and all his armor, and then waited patiently for a favorable opportunity to return to the city. On the 12th an occasion presented itself. Philip arrived at the camp, which caused so great a commotion that he escaped unnoticed, and presented himself at the gates of the city. He gave Coligny his uncle's letter, showed him the tent of the duke, and told him that the king was there at that moment, which was confirmed by the hoisting of the royal standard. Coligny then conceived the idea of replying to all their rejoicings by cannon, and if the ball went three feet over the king's head it was certainly not intentional on the part of those who pointed it. The admiral then gave ten crowns to Procope, who rejoined his companions. As for the poet Fracasso, they expected him in vain. He never reappeared. Some peasants

declared they had seen the body of a man hanging on a tree near where the attack on the duke took place, and this they supposed to be poor Fracasso.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE ASSAULT.

As the victory of Saint Laurent did not make Saint Quentin surrender, it was evident that the garrison were determined to hold out to the last extremity. It was therefore resolved to press on the attack. They had already been ten days before the town, and it was a long time to lose before such poor walls. They must finish as quickly as possible with these insolent bourgeois, who dared to hold out when they had no longer the hope of succor, and could only look forward to the horrors of a town taken by assault.

The news of the defeat soon spread in spite of the admiral's care, but strangely enough he confesses himself that it had more effect on the soldiers than on the bourgeois.

The great difficulty was to get workmen to repair the ravages of the cannon. These were most severe on the rampart of Remicourt, which, since the arrival of the English army, was no longer tenable. Two batteries had been established which swept the whole rampart from the Porte d'Isle to the Tour Rouge, so that the workmen dared no longer approach it.

At last an idea struck Dandelot. He directed them, at nightfall, to go down to the Somme and collect as many as possible of the boats that had been abandoned there, and have them carried to the rampart, laid across, and filled with earth. Five were brought the first night, and behind these the men worked.

The admiral had the paving stones taken up from the streets and carried to the towers, whence he had them hurled down on the Spanish trenches, but the miners, being greatly protected by the gabions, were able to continue their work of destruction.

However, it took nine days to finish the works. So many days gained for the King of France. On the 22d everything was ready for action, and the Quentinois could judge of the danger of their situation. The whole of the space between the Tour a l'Eau and the Tour Saint Jean was occupied by an immense battery of fifty cannon. On the other side the Flemish batteries had resumed their fire, while the English divided into two parties, aided on one side by the Spanish batteries of Carondelet and Julien Romeron, and on the other launched their bullets against the Faubourg de Pointpoille and the tower of Sainte Catherine. Saint Quentin was completely enveloped in a circle of fire.

Unfortunately, the old wall of Remicourt, which was the point most fiercely attacked, offered but a feeble resistance. At each new volley the whole wall trembled, and the bastion at length fell. Saint Quentin looked like the salamander enveloped in flames. Each ball carried away a piece of wall, or

shook a house to its foundations, and the Quartiers d'Isle and Remicourt presented only a vast ruin. They attempted at first to prop up the houses, but scarcely had they done so to one, when the next fell, dragging both down together. The inhabitants of these two devoted quarters gradually retired to the Quartier Saint Thomas, which was the least exposed to the fire, although some clung to their falling walls until they were actually buried in the ruins.

And yet, amid all this havoc and desolation, no voice spoke of surrender. Every one felt that they had a sacred mission, and seemed to say, "We shall fall, town, houses, ramparts, citizens and soldiers, but in falling we shall save France."

On the 26th the rampart was a mass of stone, in which eleven large breaches had been made. All at once, about two in the afternoon, the firing ceased and a dead silence succeeded to the frightful cannonade that had continued for ninety-six hours, and the assailants were seen approaching in numbers through the covered ways.

They believed that the moment for assault had arrived. But it was not for that day. They were only working still further at their mines. The evening and night were employed in repairing the breaches as much as possible.

On the morning of the 27th the cannon began to play once more, and the work of the night was destroyed. There were eleven breaches. The first, in the Tour Saint Jean, was guarded by the Comte de Breuil, governor of the town; the second was guarded

by the Scotch company under Comte Haran, some of the most indefatigable soldiers in the garrison; the third by the company Dauphin, the fourth by Saint Andre and Lactance and his Jacobins, being only fifty feet from the convent. The fifth was guarded by Coligny himself, having with him Yvonne, Maldent and Procope; the sixth by a company under Captain Rambouillet, and to this Pilletrousse was joined; the seventh by Captain Samac, who, though ill in bed, had himself carried to the rampart on a mattress. The eighth by three other captains, called Force, Ozer and Soliel; the ninth by Dandelot, with thirty-five men-at-arms and thirty arquebusiers; the tenth by Captain Lignieres and his company, and the eleventh by the company La Fayette, to which was joined the two Scharfensteins and Malemort.

The whole of these soldiers amounted to about eight hundred, and the bourgeois with them to about double the number.

On the 27th, as we have said, the cannon recommenced firing, and played incessantly till about two o'clock in the afternoon. It was useless to reply to such a fire, which destroyed the ramparts and the houses and killed the towns-people in the most retired streets. They were, therefore, obliged to wait, but the crier went about incessantly ringing and calling out, "To arms! citizens, to arms!" At two o'clock the firing ceased, and a flag was raised as a signal for the assault.

Three attacks were made, one toward the convent of the Jacobins, the other toward the Tour a l'Eau,

and the third toward the Porte d'Isle. The first body was composed of the old Spanish bands, led by Alonzo de Lazieres, and of fifteen hundred Germans under their colonel, Lazare Swendy; the next by a band of six Spanish battalions under Colonel Navarez and six hundred Walloons, and the third was led by Carondelet and Julien Romeron, to whom were joined two thousand English.

For a quarter of an hour there was a frightful mêlée. Nothing but cries and oaths were to be heard. Every one did marvels. The three attacked points were most vigorously defended. Lactance and his Jacobins had done well. The enemy had been repulsed from the Tour Rouge, but more than twenty monks lay among the dead. The body who attacked the Tour a l'Eau were not more fortunate. They were driven back to the trenches, where they re-formed for a second assault. At the Tour d'Isle Carondelet had his hand broken by a shot from Malemort, while Julien Romeron, thrown from the top of the ramparts by Heinrich Scharfenstein, had both his legs broken by the fall.

There was a momentary pause, and then all the columns re-formed for attack, having received reinforcements. What made the defense more sublime was that chief, soldiers and bourgeois knew well that it was useless and could not have a successful result, but it was a duty to accomplish, and each one fulfilled it nobly.

Nothing could be more terrible than the second attack, which was accompanied neither by trumpet

nor drum, but both parties met in silence, and the only sound heard was the clash of steel. The breach that he guarded not being attacked, Coligny could watch the combat, or go where he believed his presence to be most needed. He saw now that a group of Spaniards, having dislodged the arquebusiers from the Tour Rouge, had advanced along the parapet of the rampart and were gliding into the tower itself.

Coligny was not at first uneasy at this. The way they had to go was so narrow and so difficult that if the company of the dauphin did their duty they would be easily repulsed. But to his great astonishment the Spaniards succeeded without any one appearing to interfere with them.

All at once a soldier came rushing to announce to Coligny that the breach of the Tour Rouge was forced. It was impossible for the admiral to see that point from where he stood, but feeling that where the enemy were becoming victorious was where he was most needed, he called to him five or six men, and crying as he went, "Help, my friends!" he ran as fast as he could toward the tower. But he was not more than half-way there when he saw some of the company Dauphin flying toward the Jacobins, who on their part stood firm and died without retreating. Coligny ran on, but before he reached the place, the rampart was taken, and he rushed full into a Spanish column who were already masters of the wall. The admiral looked round him. A young page, almost a child, and one gentleman and his valet were all that had accompanied him. At that mo-

ment two men attacked him at once. The admiral defended himself, but the little page cried out in Spanish:

"Do not kill Monseigneur de Coligny."

"Are you indeed the admiral?" said one man.

"If he is, he belongs to me," cried the other. And he held out his hand to seize Coligny. But he, striking his hand with the handle of his pike, said, "There is no need to touch me. I surrender, and with God's help will find for my ransom a sum of money which will content you both."

The two soldiers then exchanged a few words, seemingly of concord, for they then turned round and asked who the others were.

"One is my page, the second my valet, and the third a gentleman of my house," replied the admiral. "Their ransom will be paid with mine. But take us out of the way of the Germans; I do not desire to have anything to do with them."

"Follow us," said the two soldiers, "and we will put you in a place of safety."

They then led them into a fosse at the entrance of a mine. There they met Don Alonzo de Cazerres, with whom the soldiers exchanged some words. Then Don Alonzo approached Coligny, bowed courteously to him, and pointing to a group of gentlemen, said: "There is our Duke Emmanuel. If you have any request to make, address yourself to him."

"I have nothing to say to him but that, as I am a prisoner to brave men, I wish them to receive my ransom."

Emmanuel heard, and said in French, with a smile: "Monsieur de Coligny, if our prisoner is paid for according to his value, those two fellows will be richer than some princes of my acquaintance."

Then leaving the admiral in the hands of Don Alonzo, Emmanuel mounted the ramparts by the breach.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A FUGITIVE.

THE inhabitants of Saint Quentin knew well what a desperate game they had played in opposing the triple armies, and they never thought of asking for mercy. It was the nature of wars at that time to bring in their train frightful reprisals. In those armies, composed of men of all countries, and where mercenaries of the same nation often fought against each other, and when money engagements were often badly kept, pillage was reckoned as part of the pay, and indeed often the whole of it.

The defense had been desperate everywhere, except at the point where the company Dauphin had given way. The enemy already occupied the Tour Rouge, the admiral was taken, and Emmanuel on the ramparts, yet they still fought, not to save the city but to kill and be killed. Even when the Spaniards forced their way into the town, they found groups of armed bourgeois defending the streets. However, at the cries of "The city is taken!" and

at the sight of flames, these last struggles ceased, and the breaches were forced one after the other—M. Dandelot's the last. As each was taken loud cries were heard, succeeded by a mournful silence. The cries were of victory, and the silence that of death. The breach forced, its defenders murdered or received ransom if they fancied them rich enough, the troops rushed into the town and the pillage commenced. It lasted five days, and during that time every species of horror and cruelty was committed. No one was spared; neither women nor children, old men, monks or nuns. With a pity for the buildings which he had not for the human beings, Philip had given orders to respect all sacred buildings; but the order was useless, nothing could stop the destruction. The Church of Saint Reine was utterly destroyed, the collegiate pierced through by bullets, and robbed of its magnificent stained glass windows, its silver vases and chandeliers, and every large building in the town was a mass of ruins by the end of five days.

Some of the unfortunate people took refuge in caves and cellars, others glided down the walls in a last hope of escaping, but most of these had fallen under the Spanish balls or English arrows. However, as night came, the sound of firing ceased, and soon after dark a movement was heard in the rushes on the banks of the Somme, but so slight was it that no one could have distinguished, at ten feet off, whether it were caused by the wind or by the movement of a body. A few seconds afterward a black object was seen for a moment on the river, but which

immediately disappeared. Two or three times the same object appeared again at intervals, following the course of the stream, but never approaching the banks. At last the swimmer (for, as he left the city further and further behind him, the individual whom we are following appeared less and less to fear showing that he belonged to that class of animal which has declared itself to be the noblest) struck off to the left, and landed on that bank just at a place where the shade of a group of willows rendered the darkness thicker than in more open spots.

One moment he stopped, held his breath, and, remaining as mute and motionless as the trunk against which he leaned, he looked all round him with senses sharpened by danger. All seemed silent and tranquil. The city alone, wrapped in smoke from which jets of flame frequently issued, seemed to be in its last agony. The fugitive appeared to look with much regret upon a town where doubtless he had ties of love and friendship. He uttered a sigh, murmured a name, and then, after feeling that his poniard, his only arm (and which hung from a chain which by night, at all events, looked like gold), was safe, he ran toward the marsh of Abbretta. For any one who did not know the place, the path was dangerous enough, from the bogs and marshes; but the fugitive knew his road well, and never deviated from the solid path. He crossed the marsh and found himself on the plain which extends from Abbretta to Canchy, and which, when covered with corn, presents in the wind the appearance of an agitated sea.

He ran on for about a quarter of an hour, and then stopped, looking and listening intently. About one hundred feet off stood the mill of Canchy, looking in the darkness double its usual size. But it was not this which arrested his attention; it was the sound of horses' feet, and the sudden appearance of a black mass drawing nearer and nearer toward him. There could be no doubt it was a Spanish patrol. The fugitive looked round him. He was just in the place where the attack of De Waldeck upon Emmanuel had taken place. On the left was the little wood into which two of the adventurers had fled, and into this the fugitive rushed, and found himself completely hidden. It was time, for the horsemen passed within fifteen feet of him, as he lay there with his face to the ground, motionless and silent. A few Spanish words, pronounced as they passed, left him no doubt as to who they were.

When they had passed, he got up, passed his delicate hand through his hair, and leaned against a tree to rest and recover himself, when he felt something touch his hair. Curious to know what this could be, he looked round him, but the darkness was so intense that he could see nothing. He put up his hand to feel, then, forgetting all danger, he uttered a cry and rushed from the wood. What had touched him was a foot—the foot of a man hung from a tree.

It is needless to say that this was our old friend Fracasso.

CHAPTER XXXII.

TWO FUGITIVES.

A stag chased by hounds could not have rushed away more quickly than did the young man of whom we have been writing, who seemed to have a nervous dread of men when they are hung, although certainly most of them are less to be feared after they are hung than before. The only care that he took as he ran was to turn his back on Saint Quentin, and his only desire to get away as far as possible. The fugitive, in consequence, sustained for three quarters of an hour a course which a professional runner would have deemed impossible, and accomplished in that time about two leagues, which brought him beyond Essigny le Grand. There his breath failed him, and he lay down full length on a little hillock, panting like a stag at bay. Doubtless he had passed the further Spanish outposts, and as for the dead man, even if he had got down from his tree, he would not have waited for three quarters of an hour to seize hold of him. Besides, supposing it to be Fracasso, he must certainly have hung there for at least twenty days, and the position was not so agreeable that he should have voluntarily remained there if he could help it.

As our friend lay thus, abandoning himself to these and similar reflections, a quarter to twelve

struck on the clock of Gibercourt, and the moon rose behind the wood of Remigny, so that he could look around him and see clearly where he was.

He was on the field of battle, just in the midst of the cemetery improvised by Catherine de Laillier, and the little hillock on which he rested was a mound under which twenty soldiers lay. However, as it appears that corpses buried three feet below the ground are less terrifying than those which hang three feet above, our fugitive contented himself this time with a nervous shiver, and lay listening to the mournful cry of the owl.

Suddenly, however, he frowned and turned his head in a listening attitude. Another sound had struck upon his ear—that of the distant gallop of a horse. He stood up and looked at the horizon. As the road was thickly covered with dust, the sound had not reached him until the horse and his rider were tolerably near, and he clearly saw them by the moonlight about five hundred feet off and directly in his road. He threw a rapid glance behind him, and at three hundred feet saw, like a dark curtain, the wood of Remigny, and to this he directed his steps with fresh vigor; but, as he started, he heard behind him what seemed to be a cry of joy. This only spurred him on to fresh activity, and as the noise of his flight startled the owl, which took to its wings, he envied its rapid and silent course, which carried it so quickly into the shade of the wood. But if the fugitive had not the wings of the owl, the horse of his pursuer seemed to possess them, and

followed him with frightful rapidity. The horse neighed, and the man called. Had the fugitive been less terrified he would have heard the word "Stop!" pronounced in every tone, from that of prayer to that of menace; but he only redoubled his efforts to reach the wood, and the rider his to catch him. At last, with extended arms, throbbing temples, ringing ears, and a cloud over his eyes, he found himself about twenty feet from the wood; but, alas! the rider was ten feet from him. He tried to rush on, but he heard a growling as of thunder behind him, felt a shock, and rolled over half fainting. Then he saw the rider jump down, felt him raise him up, sustain him, look at him by the moonlight, and then heard him cry:

"By the soul of Luther! it is Yvonnet!"

At these words Yvonnet, making an immense effort, fixed his haggard eyes upon the speaker, and in a half-expiring voice, murmured:

"By the soul of the pope! it is Monseigneur Dandelot!"

We have followed Yvonnet's flight. We must now see why Dandelot was pursuing him, and, for this purpose, we must go back to the moment when Emmanuel put his foot on the rampart of Saint Quentin.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ADVENTURER AND CAPTAIN.

WE said before that Maldent, Yvonnet and Procope were stationed at the same breach as Coligny, and that this was never attacked.

When the town was taken, our adventurers judged that their task was at an end, and each fled in any direction that he thought safest. Yvonnet's first idea was to offer the protection of his sword to his friend, Gudule Peuquoy, but doubtless he reflected that however formidable his arms might be, they would not be of much service in this case, and that the young girl's own beauty and grace would be a better protection to her than his sword. Besides, he knew that her father and uncle had a hiding-place which they considered perfectly secure, and in which they had placed ten days' provisions. Now, it was probable that by that time order would be re-established, and then Gudule could come forth in safety. But Yvonnet himself felt little inclination to be buried for ten days, and preferred taking his chance of safety in flight. He therefore threw away his sword and cuirass, climbed the rampart at a deserted point, and threw himself into the fosse scarcely noticed by the sentinels, whose attention was diverted by the cries from the city. Many others had had the same idea, but all attempted to fly immediately instead of waiting for night, and, in so doing, met

with instant death. Two or three corpses had fallen backward in the fosse and were floating down the stream toward Somme. This gave our young adventurer an idea, which was to play the corpse, and, holding himself stiff and motionless, to let himself float along with them, and in this way he reached the clump of trees where he lay hidden until the darkness permitted him to attempt his escape, as we have seen.

We must now return to Dandelot.

He, although a general, had been fighting like the commonest soldier in the army. At last, a dozen men threw themselves on him, made him prisoner and carried him off, without having an idea of his rank. When taken to the camp, the admiral had, without explaining their relationship, bargained for his ransom for one thousand crowns, to be paid along with his own. But to Emmanuel it was impossible to hide his rank, and therefore, although he invited him to supper with his brother and the constable, he gave orders that he should be watched with as much care as they were. At the supper, which was prolonged till half past ten, they were treated with the greatest courtesy, and Emmanuel did his best to make all forget that they were at the table of their conqueror. At half past ten they left and retired to tents, which had been prepared for them in the very center of the camp, within an inclosure of palisades, to which there was but a small entrance guarded by two sentinels. Besides this, a circle of sentinels guarded the palisades.

Often, during the long nights of the siege, Dandelot had, from the top of the wall, watched the gigantic camp at his feet. He knew the position of each chief, the space between the different bodies, and the whole nature of the ground. Ever since he had been a prisoner, which was not long, as we know, his whole mind had been full of the idea of escape. He was bound by no promise—he had not surrendered—he had been taken, and his determination was fixed to make the attempt as soon as possible. Therefore, when he left the tent of Emmanuel to return to his own, he looked earnestly around him to discover anything that might assist him.

An officer was to be sent to Cambray to announce the taking of the city and to carry the list of prisoners. This list had been augmented during supper, and the officer, after the guest had left Emmanuel, came to him that he might add the names. His horse, one of the swiftest of the prince's stables, stood about ten feet off, held by a groom.

Dandelot approached the animal, seeming to admire it, then, with one bound, justifying his reputation as the best rider in the French army, jumped into the saddle, dashed his spurs into the horse's sides, overthrew the groom, and galloped off. The groom cried out as soon as he could, but Dandelot was already some way off. He passed like an arrow before the tent of the Comte de Megue, and the sentinel took aim at him, but his gun missed fire. Another fired, but missed him. Five or six tried to bar his way with halberds, but he overthrew

or leaped over them, reached the Somme and rushed into the river, and though the bullets flew around him they did nothing but carry away his hat—so that both he and his horse reached the other bank in safety. Arrived there, he felt that the best part of his work was over. He did not know the country, but he knew the direction of the principal villages near Saint Quentin, and he rode straight on toward Essigny le Grand. He rode on for some time, and then he fancied he saw a human being; and, desirous to know exactly where he was, had called out to him. But the figure had seemed as anxious to escape as he was to reach him. The rest we know. How, when Yvonnet was within twenty feet of the wood, he was actually knocked over by Dandelot's horse, and the two recognized each other.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

COMPIEGNE.

THE news of the loss of the battle of Saint Quentin had fallen on France like a clap of thunder, and never had the constable stood in graver need of the constant support of Diane de Poitiers, to prevent him from losing the king's favor entirely. Indeed, the blow was terrible. One half of the nobility were occupied with the Duc de Guise in the conquest of Naples, and the other half were annihilated. A

few gentlemen, most of them wounded, had escaped and rallied round the Duc de Nevers, who had himself been wounded in the thigh, and that was all that was left from the great butchery.

Four or five poor villages, scarcely protected by ramparts out of condition, badly victualed and garrisoned—Ham, La Fere, Laon, La Catelet, and, in the midst of them, Saint Quentin—three armies arrayed against them, Spanish, Flemish and English, the last of which was perfectly fresh and anxious to march on Paris. A king, isolated, without personal genius, brave, but brave as an individual capable of being an excellent soldier but a poor general, his only counselors the Cardinal de Guise and Catherine de Medicis. Such was the condition of France. And all felt that this ill news was but the forerunner of other not less terrible—the taking of Saint Quentin and the march to Paris of the triple army.

The king's first act was to order secret preparations for a retreat to Orleans, that old fortress of France.

The queen, the three princes, the little princess, and all the ladies of the court were to hold themselves ready to set out, night and day, at the first order given. As for the king, he proposed to go and rejoin the remains of the army, anywhere it might be, and fight with them to the last. All was arranged for the dauphin to succeed, in case of his death, with Catherine de Medicis for regent and Cardinal de Lorraine for adviser.

Messengers were dispatched to the Duc de Guise

to hasten his return, with all he could collect of the army of Italy. These measures taken, Henry the Second waited anxiously. He heard that, contrary to all expectation, Saint Quentin still held out, and that fifteen thousand men had fallen before the walls of the heroic town, struggling with its four or five hundred soldiers against that immense army. They heard also that Dandelot had managed to get in with his little re-enforcements. The danger still existed, but it was less imminent. All the hope of France rested for the time upon Saint Quentin.

Henry prayed to Heaven that the city might hold out for eight days longer, and, accompanied by Catherine de Medicis, set off for Compiègne, which was only a few leagues from the seat of war.

In case of need the king would join the army, if one still existed, and the queen would return to Saint Germain to direct the retreat.

Having installed himself in the chateau, and sent out men to the neighborhood of Saint Quentin to find out the condition of the place, and Laon to inquire what had become of the army, they returned, saying that Saint Quentin still held out, and that all that remained of the army, some two or three thousand men, was at Laon with the Duc de Nevers.

M. de Nevers knew the length of that war of sieges which the Spaniards would probably begin after the fall of Saint Quentin, and dispatched bodies of troops to all the neighboring towns likely to be attacked, he himself remaining at Laon with the

rest, where the king was to join him with any fresh troops that could be levied.

Toward the close of the day a heavy chariot stopped at the door of the Chateau de Compiègne, without having awakened any curiosity in passing through the town. A man about forty years of age, with an almost African complexion, black beard and hollow eyes, and a lady about thirty-six, with white skin, piercing eyes and superb teeth, got out, followed by three or four officers. The porter looked at them in astonishment, as he muttered: "The king! the queen!" but was told to keep silent.

The next day the inhabitants of Compiègne learned that the king and queen had arrived the night before, sadly and quietly. They flocked round the chateau with loud cries of "Vive le roi!" "Vive la reine!" for Henry was loved, and Catherine not yet hated. The king and queen came out on the balcony.

"My friends," said the king, "I came here to be myself the defender of France. I hope that the enemy will not come here, but in any case let all prepare for defense, as the brave Quentinois have done. Whoever shall have news to bring, either good or bad, of the besieged city, will be welcome at the chateau."

Then the windows closed, and the king appeared no more, and each one did his best to prepare for defense. The king remained at the chateau, sad and gloomy, spending most of his time on a tower, whence he could see the roads to Saint Quentin, and fancying every person whom he saw approaching to

be the expected messenger. The king had arrived on the 15th of August, and days passed on, and all they knew was that Saint Quentin still held out.

On the 24th Henry was walking in the park, when a distant sound made him start. It was the roar of artillery. For three days it continued, from the early morning till late at night. Then on the 27th, at two in the afternoon, it stopped. What had happened? what did the silence mean? Had Saint Quentin really fallen? He waited till nine o'clock in the evening, then, unable to restrain his anxiety, he sent off two or three couriers with orders to take different routes, so that if one fell into the hands of the enemy another might escape.

Till midnight the king wandered in the park. Then he returned to the chateau, vainly seeking for sleep, and by daybreak was again at his post of observation. Scarcely had he reached it, when, on the road so long watched, he saw, raising the dust which glittered in the first rays of the sun, a horse carrying two riders.

Henry had no doubt that these were messengers from Saint Quentin, and sent at once to have the gates opened for them. A quarter of an hour after, the horse stopped at the gate of the chateau, and the king uttered a cry of joy on recognizing Dandelot. Behind him was Yvonnet, who had served him as guide.

The horse might perhaps have preferred a different arrangement, but he was a noble animal, full of fire and courage, and had taken but three hours

and a half to accomplish the distance from Gibercourt to Compiègne, nearly eleven leagues.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PARISIANS.

THE news brought by the two messengers was of the kind that is easily told, but always much talked over. The king soon learned all there was to tell. The city was taken. The two greatest generals of France, in the absence of the Duc de Guise, were prisoners, and it was still doubtful whether the victorious army would march direct on Paris, or stay to subdue the intermediate towns. The former plan was more likely to be advocated by the bold genius of Emmanuel Philibert, and the latter by the timid and cautious one of the king.

It was decided that, after taking a little repose, each of the new-comers should set off again, Dandelot to accompany the queen to Paris, where she was to make an appeal to the patriotism of the bourgeois, and Yvonnet to Laon, to carry letters to the Duc de Nevers, and then to wander as a spy round the Spanish camp and endeavor to ascertain their intentions.

It was very likely that any one engaged on so perilous a mission would be taken and hung, but this idea, which would have made Yvonnet shudder the night before, had no effect upon him in broad daylight,

M. Dandelot was also authorized to treat with the Cardinal de Lorraine, who had the management of the finances, for the money of which he and his brother had need. Yvonnet received once more twenty gold crowns, and leave to take any horse that he pleased from the stables.

At ten o'clock in the morning the two set off, one eastward and the other westward. We shall follow Dandelot, who proceeded with the queen to Paris as fast as the heavy carriage could go. The terror was perhaps greater in Paris than at Compiègne. Everywhere was to be seen carriages filled with people and carts full of furniture, men on horseback, and every description of vehicle, leaving Paris. Dandelot and the queen now brought additional bad news, and much would depend on the way in which it was received and told.

"My friends," cried Dandelot, addressing the first group of bourgeois he met with, "glory to the inhabitants of Saint Quentin! They have held out nearly a month in a place where the bravest would have hesitated to promise a week, and by this resistance have given Monsieur de Nevers time to reassemble the army, to which the king is constantly sending new re-enforcements. And here is her majesty Queen Catherine, who comes among you to make an appeal to your patriotism and to your love for your king."

At these words the queen put her head out of the carriage window, saying:

"Yes, my good friends, it is I who come in the

name of your king to announce to you that all the towns are willing to do their best, as Saint Quentin has done. Illuminate, then, in token of the confidence which the king has in you, and the love that you bear him. And this evening I will consult with your magistrates, and with Monsieur de Lorraine and Monsieur Dandelot, on the best measures to be taken to repulse the enemy, already discouraged by the length of the siege of the first town they have tried."

There was a great knowledge of the Parisians in this method of announcing the most terrible news that the population of a capital ever received. The result was that the people who, if they had been simply told, "Saint Quentin is taken and the Spaniards are marching on Paris," would have run in terror about the streets, screaming "All is lost! let every one save himself!" now began to cry "Long live the king! long live the queen! long live Monsieur Dandelot!" and followed the carriage to the Louvre almost joyfully. Arrived at the Louvre, Dandelot spoke again.

"My friends," said he, "the queen will be in an hour at the Hotel de Ville. She will come on horseback, and by your numbers she will judge of your love. Do not forget the torches and the illuminations."

An immense shout was the answer, and they felt that the people were to be relied upon.

The Cardinal de Lorraine was now desired to summon all the magistrates of the city to the Hotel

de Ville at nine in the evening. The young dauphin was sent for, and this procession, which might have been a funeral one, became a real triumph. One hundred and eighty thousand people accompanied the queen, and torches, illuminations and flowers were to be seen everywhere. Then, from time to time, a spirit of menace seemed to pass over the crowd, and the cry arose, "Death to the English and the Spaniards!"

The queen and dauphin entered the Hotel de Ville, but reappeared almost immediately on the balcony, leaving the cardinal and Dandelot to talk to the magistrates and principal bourgeois. They did their business well. They spoke to them of the king's love for his people, and how he was ready to sacrifice life itself to ward off the dangers that threatened them. They declared that, however great the loss that France had sustained, it was not irreparable if the king found in his subjects the same zeal that they had always shown for the glory and interest of the State, and added that the king, in order not to oppress his people, had mortgaged his own private lands, but that beyond this he had no resource but the voluntary aid that would be granted him by the love of his subjects, and that the greater the need the greater should be the efforts of the French nation to enable their king to oppose the enemy with an equal force.

This produced its effect. The city of Paris voted one hundred thousand francs for the first expenses of the war, with a request to all other principal

towns to do the same. As for the immediate means of defense, Dandelot proposed a levy of thirty thousand French soldiers and twenty thousand mercenaries; and to furnish the necessary funds for this gigantic undertaking he proposed that the clergy, without exception, should give up a year's income, and that every gentleman should tax himself according to his ability. The *tiers-état* were to be taxed by M. de Lorraine. Some of these measures were voted enthusiastically, those relating to the clergy and nobility adjourned. It was, however, decided that forty thousand Swiss and eight thousand Germans should be enrolled, and that in every province throughout the kingdom companies should be formed of all the young men capable of bearing arms.

They separated at midnight, and then the queen came down, holding by the hand the dauphin, who, half asleep, still saluted the crowd with his little velvet cap. At half past one the queen re-entered the Louvre, and might have said, like Mazarin, "They have shouted; they will pay."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AT THE SPANISH CAMP.

WE must now see what Philip the Second and Emmanuel were doing in the camp, and how they were there losing that time which others were employing so well.

Firstly, as we have said, the town of Saint Quentin, suffering the consequences of its heroism, had been given up to five days' pillage, and this town, which, living, saved France, continued to do so in its death struggle, for the victors poured out upon its devoted streets forgot that the rest of France was busy organizing a desperate defense. We will pass over the five days of murder, incendiarism and desolation, and commence on the 1st of September to show the state of the camp. At eleven o'clock there was to be a council held in the king's tent.

The king held in his hand an open letter, which had been just brought to him by a messenger who was seated on a bench at the door of the royal tent, drinking a glass of wine that had just been poured out for him. This letter, which had a large seal in red wax representing a miter and two crosses, appeared much to interest Philip the Second. Just as he was reading it for the third time the sound of a horse's gallop stopping at the door of the tent made him raise his head. In a few seconds the tapestry that hung over the entrance was raised, and a servant announced "His Excellency Don Luis de Vargas, secretary to Monsieur the Duc of Alba." Philip uttered a cry of joy, then, as if half ashamed of himself for giving way to an impulse, kept silence a moment, and then said in a cold tone, "Let Don Luis de Vargas enter."

Don Luis came in. He was covered with dust, and looked pale from a long and hasty ride, but he stood motionless and hat in hand before the king,

waiting to be questioned before he spoke, for the law of etiquette was more stringent than any other law in Spain. The king gave a smile like a ray of the sun shining through an autumn fog, and said, "God be with you, Don Luis de Vargas. What news from Italy?"

"Both good and bad, sire. We are masters in Italy, but Monsieur de Guise is returning in haste with part of the French army."

"Is it the Duke of Alba who sends you with this intelligence?"

"Yes, sire; and he ordered me to take the shortest road, and to make all possible haste, so as to be here as long as possible before Monsieur de Guise. Consequently I have made this long journey in fourteen days, while I feel sure it will take the Duc de Guise at least double to reach Paris."

"Really you have been diligent, Don Luis, and could not have come in less time. But have you no letter from the duke?"

"Sire, the duke feared that I might be taken prisoner, and therefore merely gave me this message: 'Tell his majesty to remember how King Tarquin cut down the tallest poppies in his garden. Nothing ought to grow too tall in a king's garden, not even princes. His majesty,' he added, 'will know what I mean.'"

"Yes," murmured the king, "I understand and recognize the prudence of my faithful Alvarez. Thank you, Don Luis. Now go to repose; my people will take care of you."

Don Luis bowed, retired, and the tapestry fell behind him.

We must now pass to the tent of the duke Emmanuel. He is bending over a bed, on which lies a man under the hands of a surgeon, who is dressing a wound in his side, which from the weakness and paleness of the patient seems to be serious. This is no other than our old friend Scianca-Ferro, whom we have forgotten for some time, and who now lies in the duke's tent on a sick-bed.

"Well?" asked Emmanuel, anxiously.

"Much better, monseigneur. Indeed, the patient is out of danger," replied the doctor.

"I told you so, Emmanuel," said Scianca-Ferro, in a voice which he vainly tried to render firm. "Indeed, it is quite humiliating to be treated like an old woman for a miserable contusion."

"A miserable contusion! which broke one rib and injured two others, and has made you spit blood with every breath for the last six days."

"It is true it was a good blow," replied Scianca, trying to smile. "Pass me the machine in question, Emmanuel."

Emmanuel looked round for what Scianca called the machine, and picked it up from the corner of the tent. It was an immense cannon ball.

"Corpo di bacco!" cried the wounded man, "confess it is a charming plaything. And what has been done with the man who gave it?"

"According to your wish, no harm has been done to him. He gave his word not to fly, and now is

probably as usual, a few steps from the tent, sighing and weeping with his head in his hands."

"Yes, poor devil, I have, as you tell me, cut open the head of his nephew, a worthy German, who swore well, and struck better. *Ma foi!* had there been ten such men at each breach, it would have been something like the famous war of the Titans, which you told me of when you tried to explain that unlucky Greek that I never could learn. But listen, Emmanuel: there is some one quarreling with our worthy German. It must be something serious, for they tell me that he has not opened his lips for five days."

Indeed, the sound of a struggle reached them, with an accompaniment of oaths in Spanish, Picard, and German.

Emmanuel left Scianca-Ferro to the care of the doctor, and went out to see what was the matter. The authors of the commotion were a donkey, loaded with cabbages, carrots and lettuce, braying loudly and kicking his load all about the ground. Heinrich Scharfenstein, who was laying about him vigorously with the pole of a tent which he had torn up, and who had already overturned seven or eight Flemish soldiers, for his melancholy had taken nothing from the strength of his arm; and a young and pretty peasant girl who, with a vigorous arm, was belaboring a Spanish soldier with all her strength, he having probably attempted to take some liberties with her, while a peasant, the proprietor of the ass,

was swearing loudly as he picked up the fallen vegetables, which the soldiers appeared to covet.

The presence of Emmanuel produced the effect of a Medusa's head. The soldiers let fall their cabbages and lettuces, the girl let go the Spanish soldier, who ran off with half a mustache, and even the ass ceased to bray. Heinrich alone, like a machine that could not stop, went on dealing blows.

"What is the matter?" asked Emmanuel.

"Ah! monseigneur, I will tell you," said the peasant, approaching the prince with his arms full of vegetables, and holding his hat between his teeth, which rendered his patois still more unintelligible.

"Diable!" said Emmanuel, "I can not understand, my friend. I can speak Italian, Spanish, French or German, but I do not understand Picard. Is there no one who can tell me in French?"

"In French! Here is my daughter Yvonne, who has been to school near Somme Rouche at Saint Quentin. Speak, Yvonne."

The young girl advanced timidly.

"Excuse my father, monseigneur, he comes from Savoy, where they speak only Picard. Yesterday we heard in our village that fresh provisions were wanted at the camp, and that there were no vegetables even at your table or the king's, monseigneur."

"Well, now I can understand," said the duke, "and in truth, my girl, though we do not want for provisions, vegetables are scarce."

"So my father said, 'I will take my donkey and

load it with cabbages, carrots and lettuces, and go to the camp. Perhaps it will please the king and the Duke of Savoy to have some fresh vegetables.”

“Go on, my child.”

“So this morning, at day-break, my father and I went into the garden and cut all our best vegetables and loaded our donkey and came here. Did we do wrong, monseigneur?”

“On the contrary, it was a very good idea.”

“So we thought; but hardly had we arrived when your soldiers rushed upon our poor ass, in spite of my father’s repeating, ‘They are for the king and the duke.’ Then we began to cry out, and the donkey to bray, but in spite of that we should have been robbed, not to speak of the rudeness offered to me, but for that brave man who came to our help.”

“Yes,” said Emmanuel, “and here are two men dead and four or five wounded for some miserable vegetables. But never mind, he acted with a good intention.”

“Then, monseigneur, you are not angry with us?” asked Yvonnnette, timidly.

“No, my pretty girl, on the contrary.”

“Then, monseigneur, as we have come five leagues and are very tired, may we stay here till the heat of the day has passed?”

“As long as you like,” replied the prince, “and here are three pieces of gold for your trouble.” Then turning to one of his servants, he said: “Gaetano, take these vegetables to the canteen of the king, give

these honest people something to eat and drink, and see that they are not molested."

Then, as the time for the meeting in the king's tent was drawing near, Emmanuel returned to his friend Scianca before he went there, and in his pre-occupation never observed the strange glance that the peasant and his daughter exchanged with a man who advanced furbishing the armor of the Constable de Montmorency.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH YVONNET GETS ALL THE INFORMATION HE
DESIRES.

THE pretext to enter the camp had been well chosen, and completely deceived the Duke of Savoy. In fact, if we may believe Mergey, a follower of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, who was made prisoner at the battle of Saint Laurent, there was no abundance in the Spanish lines, and even at the duke's table they were reduced to water, which seems much to have saddened M. Mergey.

When Emmanuel was gone, Gaetano led the peasant and his daughter into an open space surrounded by palisades, which adjoined the duke's tent, where they proceeded to unload the ass, and then received from Gaetano a loaf, a piece of cold meat, and a little wine—a magnificent gift under the circumstances of the army. Thus, in order, doubtless, not

to expose themselves to a fresh attack, they went cautiously out, looking around to see that no stragglers were about. No one was visible but the man who was still cleaning the constable's armor, and Heinrich Scharfenstein, who had not moved since the peasant left him.

The peasant went up to Heinrich, and, thanking him for his services, asked him to share his repast; but Heinrich shook his head and murmured, "Since Frantz is dead I am never hungry."

The peasant looked sadly at him, exchanged another glance with the armor-cleaner, and then rejoined his daughter, who had seated herself upon some hay in a little shed. Scarcely had they commenced their repast, when the indefatigable cleaner drew near.

"Peste!" cried he, "what luxury! I have a great mind to invite the constable to come and partake."

"Ah! ma foi, no," replied the peasant, in excellent French: "he would eat our little pittance himself."

"Besides, they say he is rude to young girls," said the daughter.

"Much you fear any one. Ah! mon Dieu, what a blow you gave that Spaniard who came to embrace you. I recognized you at once. What the devil made you both come here, to risk being hung for spies?"

"Firstly, to get news of you and your companions, my dear Pilletrousse."

"You are too good, Mademoiselle Yvonnette, and

if you will fill that glass, which seems to have been brought purposely for me, we will drink first to our own healths, which seem good, and then to that of our companions, who are unluckily not so well off."

"And I," said Yvonnet—for doubtless our readers have recognized him in spite of his disguise and the syllable added to his name—"will tell you what I came here for, and you must aid me to accomplish my mission."

"Ah!" said Pilletrousse, smacking his lips, "it is so pleasant to meet with an old friend."

"Do you speak of the wine, or of me?" said Yvonnet.

"Of both. But to return to our companions. Maldent, here, must have told you all about Procope, Lactance and himself, for I heard that you were all buried together."

"Yes, and we remained there several days," replied Maldent.

"But you got out of it triumphantly. Worthy Jacobins! and how did they feed you during your burial?"

"With their best. No one was ever better cared for."

"And did the Spaniards never visit you in your cave?"

"Two or three times we heard the sound of their steps on the staircase, but, seeing the long line of sepulchres lighted by a single lamp, they retired, and I really believe if they had come they would have been more frightened than we."

"Well, as for me, thanks to my knowledge of Spanish, I passed for a friend of the conquerors. Then I glided toward the tent of the constable and set to my work there."

"But Frantz and Malemort?"

"Look at poor Heinrich weeping. That will tell you what has become of Frantz."

"How could such a giant be killed?" said Yvonet, with a sigh, for he was fond of Frantz.

"It was not by a man he was killed, but by an incarnate demon called Scianca-Ferro, a foster-brother of the Duke of Savoy. Heinrich, who saw him approaching, and about to attack his nephew, hurled his iron club at him, which hit him in the side and broke his cuirass and his ribs; but it was too late; poor Frantz had already fallen under a terrific blow dealt by Scianca-Ferro, who, as he himself fell, cried out, 'Let no one hurt him who threw his club at me. If I recover I wish to cultivate the acquaintance of this amiable battering-ram.' Then he fainted, but his wish has been respected.

"Heinrich was taken prisoner without difficulty, because, when he saw his nephew fall, he went to him, sat down on the wall, and laid his head on his knees. He was surrounded and asked to surrender. 'Will they separate me from the body of my boy?' asked he. 'No,' they said. 'Then do what you like with me,' said he. Then he took the body of Frantz in his arms and followed them to the tent of the Duke of Savoy, kept him a day and a night, dug his grave by the side of the river, buried him, and

then went back and sat in the place where you found him."

"Poor Heinrich!" said Yvonnet.

"And Malemort, what has become of him?" asked Maldent.

"Malemort received two new wounds, which, with the old ones, made up twenty-six, and as they thought him dead, they threw him into the river; but it appears that the freshness of the water brought him to himself, for, in taking the constable's horse to drink at the Somme, I heard a poor wretch groaning. I approached, and recognized Malemort."

"Who expired in your friendly arms?"

"Not at all; who only wanted my help to scramble out. Fracasso is the only one of whom I know nothing."

"And I can tell you about him," said Yvonnet, with a shudder. And he recounted, growing pale even in the broad daylight, what had happened to him on the night of the 27th.

Just as he finished his recital, a great movement announced that the conference in the king's tent was over. All the chiefs came out and proceeded to their respective quarters, calling to them their men, as though they had orders to transmit, but all appeared out of temper. Then came Emmanuel himself, looking anything but pleased.

"Gaetano," cried he, "give the orders to strike the tents, saddle the horses, and pack the baggage."

This indicated a departure, but gave no hint of

the intended route, to ascertain which was Yvonnet's object.

Pilletrousse ran toward the constable's tent, hoping to hear news there. The false peasants passed along with their donkey, and waited in hopes of some remark giving them the desired information. They had not long to wait. Gaetano came out to give his orders to the grooms and valets, and seeing them, said, "You here still, good people?"

"Yes," said Yvonnet, "my father is waiting to know where he shall bring the next vegetables."

"Ah! he finds us good customers. Well! let him come to Catelet, which we are going to besiege."

"To Catelet?" murmured Yvonnet. "Mon Dieu! they are turning their backs on Paris. Here is good news for our king."

In five minutes the two had crossed the Somme, and an hour after Yvonnet, who had resumed his own dress, was galloping along the road to La Fere. At three in the afternoon he entered the Chateau of Compiègne, waving his hat and crying, "Good news! Paris is saved!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

GOD PROTECTS FRANCE.

FROM the moment when Philip the Second and Emmanuel did not march immediately on Paris, Paris was saved. How could such a fault have been

committed?—through the irresolute character of the King of Spain, or from the effect of that special favor which, in extreme situations, God always grants to France? The reader remembers the letter that King Philip held in his hand at the moment that Don Luis de Vargas arrived from Rome.

This letter was from the Bishop of Arras, one of the counselors of Philip, in whom this prince, so little confiding, generally had the most confidence. Philip had sent to consult him as to what he should do after the taking of Saint Quentin, and the bishop, as might have been expected, had answered rather as a churchman than a soldier. Cardinal Granvelle, in his collection of State letters, has preserved this one, which had so great an effect on the destinies of France, and from which we will extract a passage:

“It would not be prudent to attempt anything more against the French this year, the season being opposed to it, as well as the nature of the country. You might compromise the advantages already obtained, and the reputation of the Spanish arms. The best plan would be to limit yourself to disquiet the enemy by ravaging the country beyond the Somme.”

It was therefore the opinion of the bishop that in spite of the double victory of Saint Laurent and Saint Quentin, the Spaniards should penetrate no further into France. Although more obscure in the eyes of others, the advice of the Duke of Alba

was not less clear in the eyes of Philip: "Sire, remember how Tarquin cut down the tallest poppies in the garden."

Such was the advice of this minister, whose gloomy temper harmonized so well with the terrible temperament of the successor of Charles the Fifth. Now, this poppy that raised its head so high, was it not Emmanuel? If he grew too high, would he not have to be feared? If, after Saint Laurent and Saint Quentin, he took Paris, what could recompense such services?

Would it be enough to restore to the son what had been taken from the father? Besides, would it be for the king's interest to restore them? And when Piedmont was once again his, who would insure that he would not take the Milanais, and after that Naples, those two possessions of Spain in Italy which had already cost so much blood? This was the gigantic phantom which raised itself between Saint Quentin and Paris. Consequently, against the general opinion, and particularly against that of Emmanuel, which was to march directly upon Paris, without leaving Henry the Second breathing time, Philip had declared that the victorious army should not move forward, but should content itself with besieging Le Catelet, Ham and Channy, while they rebuilt the walls of Saint Quentin in order to make of that city the bulwark of the Spanish conquests. Henry the Second could hardly believe the good news brought to him by Yvonnet, and the French went on raising troops with vigor. Still further to reas-

sure them, they soon heard that the English and Spanish had quarreled at the siege of Le Catelet. The English, wounded at the haughty manners of the Spaniards, who took to themselves the whole glory of the battle and siege, declared their intention of retiring; and Philip, instead of trying to reconcile them, upheld the Spaniards, in consequence of which the English did withdraw. A week after the Germans mutinied, declaring that Philip and Emmanuel had received all the ransoms of the prisoners from Saint Quentin. Three thousand Germans, therefore, deserted from the Spanish army, and entered the service of the Duc de Nevers. Compiègne was fortified with great care, and an intrenched camp, capable of containing one hundred thousand men, was constructed under the protection of its guns.

About the end of September the Duc de Guise arrived, and on the following day a magnificent cavalcade, headed by the duke himself, having the cardinal at his right, M. de Nemours at his left, and two hundred gentlemen behind him, left the Hotel Guise and traversed Paris, exciting the enthusiasm of the Parisians, who thought that they had nothing to fear now that their beloved duke had returned; and that same evening the duke was proclaimed lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Perhaps in this Henry forgot his father's last words, never to elevate the house of Guise too high; but the situation was critical, and this wise advice was neglected.

The next day, the 29th of September, the duke

set off for Compiègne, and began by reviewing the troops assembled, as by a miracle, at the camp. On the 10th of August there were not, including the garrisons of the towns, ten thousand men in the whole country fit to bear arms, and even those were so discouraged that they were ready to fly at the first fire. On the 30th of September, the Duc de Guise reviewed an army of fifty thousand men, stronger than that of the King of Spain since his rupture with the English and Germans, and this army was full of enthusiasm and crying out to be led against the enemy.

Happy country, where it is only necessary to strike the ground in the name of the king and the nation, and armies immediately spring forth!

At last, on the 26th of October, they learned that Philip the Second, accompanied by the Duke of Savoy, and the whole court, had left Cambray to return to Brussels, regarding the campaign as over. Then every one might cry, not only like Yvonnet, "Paris is saved!" but "France is saved!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A REMEMBRANCE AND A PROMISE.

A YEAR had passed since King Philip the Second, retreating from Cambray to Brussels, declared the campaign of 1557 terminated, and caused twenty-

five millions of men to cry joyfully, "France is saved!"

We have seen what miserable considerations probably prevented him from following up his conquests. The annoyance experienced by the Duke of Savoy was all the greater that he suspected the cause of his being thus stopped on the right bank of the Somme, a circumstance which has puzzled modern historians as much as the halt of Hannibal at Capua did ancient ones.

Great events, however, with which we must acquaint the reader, had taken place this year. The greatest was the retaking of Calais from the English by the Duc de Guise. When Edward the Third attacked Calais by land and sea—by sea with a fleet of eighty ships, and by land with an army of thirty thousand men—the town, although poorly garrisoned, had, under the command of Jean de Vienne, one of the bravest captains of his time, held out for a year, until the inhabitants had eaten the last bit of leather in the town. Since that time, that is for two hundred years, the English had done everything to render Calais impregnable, and yet this town, which the English had taken a year to subdue, the Duc de Guise had carried in eight days. He had also retaken Guines and Ham, and the Duc de Nevers had taken Herbeumont.

Dandelot was the only rival feared at that time by the Duc de Guise, for Montmorency and Coligny were still prisoners, and to remove any one who

might approach him in the king's favor the duke was ready for anything, however ungenerous.

Dandelot belonged to the reformed religion, and as he wished to convert his brother, who was still wavering, to the same faith, he sent to him, at Antwerp, where the King of Spain still kept him prisoner, some books from Geneva, with a letter, in which he pressed him to abandon the papal heresies. This letter fell, unfortunately, into the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine, for it was the time when Henry the Second was acting with most rigor against the Protestants. Dandelot had already been several times accused of heresy, but the king had either not believed, or pretended not to believe it, for Dandelot had been brought up in the king's household since he was seven years old, and had, as we have seen, rendered real services to his country. But after this letter there could no longer be a doubt. However, Henry still declared that he would trust to no proof but Dandelot's own words, and therefore resolved to interrogate him in the presence of the whole court. But, not wishing to take him by surprise, he asked the Cardinal de Chatillon, his brother, and Francois de Montmorency, his cousin, to bring Dandelot to the queen's country house at Meaux, where the king then was, and tell him to prepare himself for his defense.

The king was at dinner when Dandelot's arrival was announced to him. He received him with great kindness, assured him that he would never forget his services, and then began to speak of the rumors

accusing him of thinking and speaking against the Catholic religion, and ending by saying:

"Dandelot, I desire you tell us your opinion about the holy mass."

Dandelot knew what grief he should cause the king, and as he had for Henry a great love and respect:

"Sire," said he, humbly, "can you not dispense with a devoted subject, as I am, answering a question of pure belief, and in which, great and powerful as you are, you are but a man like others?"

But Henry had gone too far to draw back now. He therefore ordered Dandelot to reply.

Dandelot, seeing that there was no means of evasion, replied:

"Sire, penetrated with sentiments of the most lively gratitude for all the benefits that your majesty has conferred upon me, I am ready to sacrifice my fortune and life in your service; but since you force me to a confession in matters of religion, I recognize no master but God, and can not disguise my sentiments. Therefore, sire, I am forced to declare that I believe the mass is a thing not only not ordered by our Saviour Jesus Christ or his apostles, but that it is an invention of men."

At this horrible blasphemy, which the Huguenots regard as a truth which can not be too loudly proclaimed, the king started with astonishment; and then passing from astonishment to anger:

"Dandelot!" cried he, "until now I have defended you against those who attacked you, but

after such abominable heresy I order you to quit my presence; and were it not for my old friendship for you I would pass my sword through your body!"

Dandelot, perfectly calm, bowed without replying and retired. But scarcely was he gone when Henry ordered an officer to arrest him and take him prisoner to Meaux. The order was executed. But even this did not content the cardinal. He exacted that the post of colonel-general of the French infantry, which was held by Dandelot, should be taken from him and given to Blaise de Montluc, who was devoted to the house of Guise, having been page to René the Second, Duke of Lorraine.

Such was the recompense of Dandelot for the immense service he had rendered, and which the king had promised never to forget. Therefore, Dandelot's name appeared no more as a victor.

On his side, Emmanuel had not remained inactive, but had vigorously struggled against the power of France.

The battle of Gravelines had been one of the unlucky days for France.

As for King Philip, he commanded in person the army of the Netherlands, which consisted of thirty-five thousand infantry and forty thousand horse. And it was there that he learned the death of his wife, the Queen of England.

The principal army of France was intrenched behind the Somme, and both armies were now inactive for a time.

Charles the Fifth had died in his monastery at

Saint Just, on the 21st of September, 1778, in the arms of the Archbishop of Toledo.

The young queen, Marie Stuart, aged fifteen, had just been married to the dauphin, who was seventeen.

One morning, in the month of November, 1558, Emmanuel, who was giving some orders to Scianca-Ferro, whom he was about to send as a courier to Philip the Second, saw Leona enter his room, beautiful as usual, but vainly trying by a smile to conceal her melancholy. Through the campaign of the preceding year the young girl had, as we know, been left at Cambray, but the campaign once over, Emmanuel had returned to her with a love deeper than ever, and as he had since then taken but little part in the war, they had not again been separated. Accustomed to read her thoughts in her countenance, Emmanuel was struck at once with the sadness which pierced through her forced smile.

As for Scianca-Ferro, he saw nothing more than the common in the entrance of Leona, whose sex had long been known to him; and, after exchanging with her a shake of the hand half friendly, half respectful, he took his dispatches and withdrew. Emmanuel watched him out, and then turned an uneasy glance upon Leona. She still smiled, but her cheeks were pale, and a tear glistened in her eye.

"What ails my dear child this morning?" said Emmanuel, in a tender but half-playful tone.

"I have," said Leona, "at once a souvenir to recall to you and a favor to ask."

"Leona knows that, even should my memory be treacherous, my heart is faithful. Let me first hear of the souvenir and then the request."

And, after giving orders to let no one enter, he signed to Leona to sit down on a pile of cushions, which was her usual seat. Leona took her accustomed place, and then, leaning toward Emmanuel, looked into his eyes with a glance of infinite love and devotion.

"Well?" said the duke, with an uneasy look.

"What day of the month is this, Emmanuel?" asked she.

"The 17th of November, I believe."

"Does that date recall to my beloved prince no anniversary?"

Emmanuel smiled more gladly, for his memory was better than he had pretended.

"This day twenty-four years ago," said he, "about this time, my horse, frightened by a bull, ran away, and carried me to the village of Oleggio, where I found, by the banks of the Tessin, a dead woman and almost dying child. This child I had the happiness of restoring to life—it was my beloved Leona!"

"And have you ever since then had occasion to regret this meeting?"

"On the contrary, I have blessed God whenever I have thought of it, for this child has made all my happiness."

"And if, on this solemn day, I, for the first time in my life, asked you a favor, should you think me too exacting, and would you refuse me?"

"You make me uneasy, Leona," said Emmanuel. "What request can you have to make that I should not willingly grant?"

Leona grew still paler, and in a trembling voice said:

"By the glory of your name, Emmanuel, by the solemn promises made to your dying father, swear to me, Emmanuel, to grant what I shall ask!"

The Duke of Savoy felt that some sacrifice was about to be demanded from him, but he also felt that, so asked, it must be for his honor. He therefore said, solemnly:

"All that you can ask I will grant, Leona, except to see you no more."

"Oh!" murmured she, "I thought you would make that reservation. Thanks, Emmanuel. Now, what I ask is, that you make no personal objections to the peace between France and Spain, of which my brother is coming to submit the proposals to you."

"Peace! Your brother? How do you know what I am ignorant of, Leona?"

"A powerful prince believed that he had need of your humble servant to influence you, Emmanuel, and that is how I know it."

Then, as a sound of horses was heard outside, Leona went and gave the orders, in the duke's name, to let the chief of the cavalcade enter. An instant after, as Emmanuel was holding back Leona, who wished to leave him, the usher announced:

"His Excellency Count Odoardo Maraviglia, en-

voy of their majesties, the Kings of Spain and France."

"Let him enter," replied Emmanuel, in a trembling voice.

CHAPTER XL.

THE ENVOY OF THE KINGS OF FRANCE AND SPAIN.

IN the name just pronounced the reader will have recognized the brother of Leona, the young man condemned to death for having attempted to murder the emperor, and pardoned. But although Leona had recognized him, he was far from guessing that Leona, whom he had scarcely seen, was his sister.

But how Odoardo came to be at once ambassador from the two kings we must explain. Son of an ambassador of King Francis the First, brought up among the pages of the Dauphin Henry the Second, and afterward publicly taken into favor by Charles the Fifth on the day of his abdication, Odoardo was welcome at both courts, and was considered as a fit man on both sides. When he entered, Emmanuel held out a hand to him, which he kissed respectfully.

"Monseigneur," said he, "you see me very happy, for I hope to be able to prove to your highness that you saved the life of a grateful man."

"What really saved your life, my dear Odoardo, was the generosity of the noble emperor, for whom

we are both in mourning. I was only the humble intermediary."

"So be it, monseigneur; but you were to be the visible messenger of favor. However, monseigneur, you now see in me a messenger of peace."

"It was as such you were announced to me, and as such I expected you."

"Announced! Expected! Pardon me, monseigneur, but I thought myself the first to announce my own presence, and as to the proposals I have to make, they were so secret—"

"Do not be uneasy," said the duke, trying to smile. "Have you not heard that some men have a familiar spirit, who tell them of the most secret things? I am one of them."

"Then you know the motive of my visit?"

"Yes—but the motive only, not the details."

"When your highness shall desire it, I will communicate these details."

And Odoardo, bowing, made a sign that they were not alone.

"You can speak before this young man, Odoardo. This is my familiar spirit. Remain here, Leona. We must know what is proposed. Speak, monsieur."

"What would your highness say if I announced to you that, in lieu of Ham, Le Catelet and Saint Quentin, France will yield up to you one hundred and ninety towns?"

"I should say that it is impossible."

"It is true, nevertheless, monseigneur."

"And, among them, is Calais included?"

"Ha! The new queen, Elizabeth of England, who, under pretext of religious scruples, has refused to marry King Philip, has been rather sacrificed in all this. However, it is only on certain conditions that France keeps Calais and the other towns taken from the English."

"And those conditions are—"

"That in eight years France will restore them, or pay fifty thousand crowns to England, and with this, Elizabeth, luckily, seems content, having just now enough to do with the pope."

"Has he not declared her illegitimate?"

"Yes; and she has repealed all her sister Mary's acts in favor of the Catholic religion, and re-established all those made against it by Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth."

"And what does France, with her little Queen of Scotland, in this conflict?"

"Henry the Second has declared Marie Stuart Queen of England and Scotland, as heiress of the late Queen Marie Tudor, and only descendant of James the Fifth, grandson of Henry the Seventh, King of England, and in virtue of the act declaring Elizabeth illegitimate."

"Yes," said Emmanuel, "but Henry the Eighth left a will, by which he declared Elizabeth heir to the crown, after Edward and Mary. But now let us return to our own affairs."

"Well, monseigneur, these are the principal conditions of the treaty. The Kings of France and

Spain will work conjointly to restore peace to the Church by assembling a general council. There will be an amnesty for those who have followed either party. All towns and castles taken by France from the King of Spain are to be restored. Savoy will be dismantled in compensation for Therouanne, destroyed. King Philip is to marry the princess Elizabeth of France, whose hand he had previously asked for his son Don Carlos, and with her he will receive a dowry of four hundred thousand golden crowns. The fortress of Bouillon is to be restored to the Bishop of Liege. The two kings are to restore to the Duke of Mantua what they took in Le Monferrat, and to leave the citadels they have built there."

"And are all these conditions agreed to by the King of France?" asked Emmanuel.

"All. What do you think of it?"

"I say that it is wonderful, and that if you have had the influence to bring it about, the Emperor Charles the Fifth did well to recommend you to his son."

"Alas! no, monseigneur," said Odoardo, "the two principal agents in this strange peace are Madame de Valentinois, who is uneasy at the growing fortunes of the Guises, and the credit of Queen Catherine and the constable, who feel that during his absence they are rising."

"Ah! this explains the frequent leave solicited by the constable to go into France—the demand just addressed to me, and which I have forwarded to

the king, to allow himself and his nephew to be ransomed for two hundred thousand crowns."

"The king will agree, unless he be profoundly ungrateful." Then, after a moment's silence, Odoardo went on: "But you, monseigneur, you do not ask what will be done for you?"

Emmanuel saw Leona shudder.

"Oh," replied he, "I hoped I had been forgotten."

"Had that been so, monseigneur, they must have chosen some other negotiator than the man who owed his life to you. Oh, no, thank God, the conqueror of Saint Quentin will, I trust, be largely recompensed."

Emmanuel exchanged an anxious glance with Leona, and Odoardo went on:

"Monseigneur, all the places taken from you and your father will be restored, with the exception of Turin, Pignerol, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve, of which France will remain in possession until the day when you shall have a male heir, and until that time the King of Spain will have the right to keep a garrison in the towns of Asti and Veneil."

"Then," said Emmanuel, "if I do not marry—?"

"You will lose five towns, so magnificent, monseigneur, that they would suffice for a king's crown."

"But," cried Leona, "the duke will marry. Will your excellency continue, and tell the prince what illustrious alliance is destined for him?"

Odoardo looked at the young man in astonishment, and then turned his eyes again on the prince, whose face expressed cruel anxiety. The ambassador interpreted this expression wrongly.

"Reassure yourself, monseigneur," said he. "The wife destined for you is worthy of you. It is Mademoiselle Marguerite of France, sister to King Henry the Second, and she will bring you not only the whole duchy of Savoy, but three hundred thousand golden crowns."

"Mademoiselle Marguerite," murmured Emmanuel, "is a great princess, but I have always declared that I would reconquer my duchy by arms and not by marriage."

"But," said Odoardo, "Mademoiselle Marguerite is worthy, monseigneur, to be the reward of your victories, and few princes obtain the hand of the sister of a king as a reward for gaining a battle and taking a town."

"Oh!" murmured Emmanuel, "why did I not break my sword at the commencement of the campaign?"

Odoardo looked at him in astonishment.

"Will your excellency," said Leona, "leave me a little while alone with the prince?"

Odoardo looked at Emmanuel.

"A quarter of an hour," repeated Leona, "and then your excellency shall receive from the duke the desired answer."

Odoardo bowed and withdrew, feeling that the mysterious page alone could overcome the incomprehensible opposition of the duke to the offers made to him. A quarter of an hour after he was summoned, and found Emmanuel alone. He looked sad, but he held out his hand to Odoardo and said:

“Odoardo, you may return to those who sent you, and say that I gratefully accept the proposal they have made to me.”

CHAPTER XLI.

WITH THE QUEEN.

THANKS to the skill of the negotiator, this treaty, with the exception of a few vague reports, was kept perfectly secret. It was therefore with no small surprise that two gentlemen on horseback, each followed by a squire, met each other at the gates of the Louvre, four days after the interview we have just recorded. The Duc de Guise recognized the Constable de Montmorency, whom he believed to be a prisoner at Antwerp, while the constable believed him to be with the army at Compiègne.

Between these two bitter enemies the compliments were not long. Then one turned to the right and the other to the left. The duke was going to the queen, the constable to Diana of Poitiers, and both were impatiently waited for. We will now accompany the most important of the men in his visit toward the lady who should have been the most important in the kingdom.

Since the battle of Saint Laurent, the whole civil administration of the kingdom had been in the hands

of the Cardinal de Lorraine, and the whole of the military arrangements in those of the Duc de Guise. The duke was therefore reveling in a sweet dream of ambition, the sweetest a Guise could have, when a vague rumor came to trouble it. This was the probable return of the constable to Paris, which was doubtless the preliminary to a peace. The bare idea was enough to make the duke leave Compiègne and return to Paris.

On meeting M. de Montmorency at the door of the Louvre, no doubt remained on his mind. The constable was free, and a peace was being arranged. The duke therefore mounted the stairs with a gloomy face, while M. de Montmorency went joyfully up the opposite staircase to see Mademoiselle de Poitiers.

The duke was evidently expected, for as soon as his name was pronounced, Catherine's harsh voice was heard exclaiming, "Enter, Monseigneur le Duc."

The queen was alone, but the duke cast a glance round as if looking for some one.

"Ah!" said the queen, "you are looking for your brother?"

"Yes, your majesty, for he sent a courier begging me to return to Paris."

"Yes," said Catherine, "but as the courier only set off at half past one, we did not expect you till late to-night."

"No, but he met me half-way."

"What was bringing you back?"

"My anxiety."

"Duke, you were right to be anxious, it was not without cause."

At that moment they heard a key turn in a door opening on the queen's corridor; it opened, and the cardinal appeared. Without any other greeting, he walked straight up to the queen and duke, and said, "Do you know that he has just arrived?"

"Yes," replied the duke, not doubting who was meant; "I met him at the gate."

"Who?" asked Catherine.

"The constable," replied both at once.

"Ah!" cried the queen, starting as though she had received a blow, "but perhaps he comes only as before, on a few days' leave?"

"No," said the cardinal, "this return is permanent. He and his nephew have been ransomed for two hundred thousand crowns, which doubtless they will find means to make the king pay."

"Do you know anything more?" asked Catherine.

"Not much; but I expect every moment the Duc de Nemours will arrive. He is of the Savoy, and is not suspected of belonging to our party, therefore he may probably have news to tell us."

As he spoke, some one scratched on the door. "Ah!" said the cardinal, "it is probably him."

"Open, then," said the queen. It was the Duc de Nemours, who was about to salute the queen according to the strictest rules of etiquette, but she did not give him time.

"Monseigneur le Duc, the cardinal tells me that

you probably bring news," said she. "Speak; what do you know of this miserable peace?"

"I can tell you all, for I have just quitted Odoardo Maraviglia, who negotiated it, and who had himself just left the Duke of Savoy."

"Then you ought to be well informed, for the Duke Emmanuel is one of the people most interested."

"And yet, strange to say, whether from carelessness or, as is more probable, from some secret love affair, the duke received the offers made to him with more of sadness than joy."

"Perhaps," said the Duc de Guise, bitterly, "he is badly paid by the royal gratitude. It is probable, as he is a conqueror."

"He must be hard to please if he be not satisfied, for they restored him his whole duchy, excepting five towns, and they are to be given up on the birth of a male heir."

"And who is proposed for his wife?" asked the cardinal.

"Mademoiselle Marguerite of France."

"What! the king's sister?" cried Catherine.

"She will gain her wish," said the Duc de Guise.

"She would marry no one but a reigning prince."

"Only," said Catherine, with the bitter tone in which women often speak of each other, "she has waited long enough for it. She is at least thirty-six."

"And how did Duke Emmanuel receive the proposal?"

"Very coldly at first. Maraviglia says that he thought he was about to refuse, but after a quarter of an hour's reflection he accepted, although in the evening he told Maraviglia that he did not wish to be positively engaged until he had seen the princess. The ambassador, however, said nothing of all this hesitation, but represented him to our king as grateful and joyful."

"And," said the Duc de Guise, "what provinces are to be restored to him?"

"All," replied the Duc de Nemours, "except Turin, Pignerol, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve, and they are to be restored to his first son. The King of France has not been stingy, for he restores to the Queen of England and the King of Spain about one hundred and ninety towns and castles."

"Oh!" cried the Duc de Guise, "you are not going to say, I hope, that Calais is among them?"

"I know nothing about that."

"Mordieu! for if it were, as it would be declaring my sword useless, I would offer it to some prince who would value it more."

At that moment a valet, who had been placed as a guard, lifted the tapestry and cried: "The king is in the gallery."

Catherine looked at the duke. "I will wait," said he.

"But I will not, with your majesty's permission," said the Duc de Nemours.

"No, it is better not," said Catherine. "The key, my dear Cardinal."

The cardinal passed the key to the queen, and the door had just closed behind the Duc de Nemours when at the opposite one appeared Henry the Second with gloomy look and frowning brow.

CHAPTER XLII.

WITH THE FAVORITE.

Now that we have shown proper respect by first following the higher personages, let us pass to the beautiful Diana of Poitiers, and see why the king presented himself to the queen with a frowning face.

The arrival of the constable had been no more a surprise to the Duchess of Valentinois than that of the Duc de Guise had been to the queen. And as scandal was busy about the queen and the cardinal, it was not less so about the favorite and the constable. But how could an old man sixty-eight, ugly and ill-tempered, rival a king of forty, full of elegance and gallantry? This was a mystery, but what was indisputable was the almost passive obedience of the beautiful Diana, that favorite, more queen than the queen, not only to the desires, but even to the caprices of the constable. It was then with a cry of joy that the duchess received the announcement of "the Constable de Montmorency." She was not alone, however. In a corner of the room, half lying on a pile of cushions, were the young queen, Marie Stuart, and the dauphin, married about six



"Holà! it seems to me that you are not alone, beautiful duchess,"
said Montmorency. Page 317.

The Page of the Duke of Savoy

months, and still more lover-like than on the day of their marriage. She was placing on the head of her husband a little velvet cap, which was rather too large for her, and which she declared just fitted him, and so absorbed were they that the announcement of the return of the illustrious prisoner was not even heard by them. Therefore, without heeding them in the least, Diana advanced to meet the constable with open arms, and offered him her fair forehead to kiss. He, more prudent than she, stopped just as he was about to place his lips there.

"Holà! it seems to me that you are not alone, beautiful duchess," said he.

"Yes, my dear constable."

"No, no; old as I am, my eyes are still good enough to see some one in that corner."

Diana laughed. "That is the Queen of England and France, and the heir to the crown of France. But be easy; they are so much occupied with their own affairs that they do not notice us."

"What! do matters go so badly beyond the sea that their young heads are so preoccupied?"

"My dear constable, the Scotch might be in London, or the English in Edinburgh, and the news might be proclaimed aloud in their presence, but I do not believe either of those children would turn. Oh, no! they are thinking of far more important things. They love each other, my dear constable, and what are kingdoms compared to love?"

"Well, then, all is right," said the constable. "But let me hear how our affairs go on."

"Marvelously well, it seems to me, since you are here," said Diana. "Peace is nearly concluded, Monsieur de Guise will be forced to sheath his sword, and there will no longer be any need of a lieutenant-general, but there is always need of a constable. Therefore, my dear Montmorency will take his place again as the first."

"Not badly played. But the question of ransom remains. And do you know, my beautiful Diana, that I am released on parole and our two hundred thousand crowns."

"Well?" said Diana with a smile.

"Well, mille diables! I do not mean to pay it."

"For whom were you fighting when you were taken, my dear constable?"

"Pardieu! for the king, although my wound was all my own."

"Well, then, the king must pay it. But, my dear constable, you wrote to me that if peace negotiations were brought to a happy issue, Duke Emmanuel, who is a generous prince, would probably give you up your two hundred thousand crowns."

"Ah! you have a good memory," said the constable, laughing. "Well, if I must tell, he has given it up. But as my nephew Coligny is too proud to accept such a gift, I shall not say a word about it."

"So that he will pay you his share for the duke?"

"Just so."

"And the king will give you your two hundred thousand crowns for the duke?"

"Exactly."

"So that you will have three hundred thousand crowns?"

"Yes; and which I shall owe chiefly to my beautiful duchess. But what shall we do with this money?"

"First," said the duchess, "we must apply two hundred thousand to indemnify the dear constable for his expenses in the campaign and his imprisonment. As for the rest—"

"This is how I will divide them. Half for my beautiful duchess, to buy trinkets, and the other fifty thousand for our poor children."

"It is true that our daughter Diana has already her dowry as Duchess de Castro, and that is one hundred thousand crowns. But still, my dear constable, if the king in his munificence thinks it is not enough for the wife of a Montmorency and the daughter of a king, it is not I who will ask him to close his purse-strings."

The constable looked at her with a certain admiration.

"Good!" said he. "Then the king still wears the magic ring that you placed on his finger?"

"Yes," replied she, smiling, "and as I think I hear his majesty's footstep, you will, I hope, have the proof."

"Ah! then he still has the key of that door?"

There were many secret doors in the Louvre, and to all there was one key, to many two.

"Oh!" said the duchess, looking with an expres-

sion of raillery at her old adorer, "are you going now to begin to be jealous of the king?"

"I ought to be, perhaps," growled he.

"Ah! take care," said she. "It would be losing two hundred per cent. and that is not what you usually like."

At that moment the king entered.

"Oh! sire," cried Diana, running to meet him, "you are welcome. I was about to send for you. Here is our dear constable just arrived, always young and brave, like the god Mars."

"Yes," said the king, "and his first visit is to the goddess Venus, and he is right. Your hand, my dear constable."

"Mordieu, sire!" replied Montmorency, with his usually ill-tempered look. "I do not know if I ought to give you my hand."

"And why not?" said the king, laughing.

"Why? because I think you quite forgot me in my captivity."

"I forgot you!" cried the king, beginning to defend himself when he might reasonably have attacked.

"Is it true that Monsieur de Guise made such a noise in your ears?"

"Mordieu!" said Henry, unable to restrain a sharp answer, "one can not prevent a conqueror from blowing his trumpets."

"Sire," said Montmorency, "some defeats are as famous as victories."

"Yes, but less profitable, you will confess."

"Less profitable, certainly," growled the constable. "But war is a game in which the most skillful may lose. The king, your father, knew that well."

Henry colored.

"And as to Saint Quentin, it seems to me," continued the constable, "that if it did surrender—"

"Firstly," interrupted Henry, "Saint Quentin did not surrender. It was taken, and taken, you know, after a most heroic defense. The town of Saint Quentin has saved France, that—"

Henry hesitated.

"Oh, finish. That the battle of Saint Laurent had ruined, I suppose. That is what you meant. One may be half murdered and taken prisoner in the service of a king, and that is how he thanks you."

"No, my dear constable," said Henry, whom a glance from Diana had brought to repentance, "no, I do not say that. I said only that Saint Quentin had made an admirable defense."

"Yes, and how well your majesty has treated its defender."

"Coligny? What can I do more than pay his ransom with yours?"

"I was not speaking of that. I did not mean Coligny, but Dandelot."

"Ah! but my dear constable, Monsieur Dandelot is a heretic."

"As if half of us were not heretics!"

"Constable, you are unjust."

"Unjust! Where is Monsieur Dandelot? Inspecting your cavalry, as he ought to be, or in his

castle, reposing after the famous siege of Saint Quentin, where he did such wonders? No; he is in prison at Melun, and why? Because, when asked, he gave his frank opinion about the mass. Oh, mordieu! I do not know why I do not turn Protestant, and go and offer my sword to Monsieur de Condé."

"Constable!"

"And when I think that poor, dear Dandelot owes his captivity probably to Monsieur de Guise."

"Constable, I swear to you that Monsieur de Guise had nothing to do with it."

"What! will you tell me that it was not a machination of that infernal cardinal!"

"Constable, do you wish," said the king, eluding the question, "that Dandelot shall be set at liberty in honor of your return?"

"Mille diables! I should think so."

"Well, then, sire," said Diana, "say we will that our good servant Dandelot be set at liberty to assist at the marriage of our beloved daughter Diana de Castro with Francois de Montmorency."

"Yes," growled the constable, "if ever the marriage takes place."

"And why should it not? Do you think them both too poor?" said Diana.

"Oh! if that be all," said the king, "we will find one hundred thousand crowns in some corner of our chest."

"Who spoke of money?" said the constable. "I doubt whether the marriage will take place; but for another reason."

"And what is that?"

"Because your friends the Guises are opposed to it."

"Really, constable, you fight against shadows."

"Against shadows! And what do you think brings Monsieur de Guise to Paris, if not to interrupt this marriage, which might shed new luster on my house? although," added he, insolently, "Madoiselle de Castro is illegitimate."

Diana colored and the king bit his lips, but not wishing to reply to this last speech, only said, "You deceive yourself, constable; Monsieur de Guise is not at Paris."

"And where is he, then?"

"At the camp at Compiègne."

"And you have not given him leave?"

"What for?"

"To come here."

"I? certainly not."

"Then, sire, he is here without leave, that is all."

"You are mad, constable. Monsieur de Guise knows too well what is due to me to quit the camp without permission."

"But, constable," said Diana, "what makes you think that the duke has committed this breach of discipline?"

"Pardieu! I saw him."

"When and where?" said the king.

"Just now."

"Where?"

"At the gate of the Louvre. We met there."

"How did I not see him, then?"

"Because he turned to the left, and is probably now with the queen."

"With the queen!"

"Oh! not alone, your majesty. I will wager that the cardinal forms a third."

"That I will soon see. Wait here for me, constable." And the king went out furious, and that is why he presented himself with so frowning a look in the queen's apartments.

CHAPTER XLIII.

HOW, AFTER THE VANQUISHED HAS BEEN TREATED AS A CONQUEROR, THE CONQUEROR IS TREATED AS THOUGH HE HAD BEEN VANQUISHED.

THE queen stood near the secret door, the hand which held the key behind her, and looking rather pale. The cardinal, in his half-military, half-ecclesiastical costume, stood near a table on which his hand rested, while the duke stood upright before the door, looking like a champion in the lists defying all comers. He held in his hand his hat with its red plume, but stood like an oak before the king, without losing an inch of his tall stature.

"Ah! it is you, cousin?" said the king. "I am astonished to find you here. I believed you at the camp at Compiègne."

"Just like me, sire," replied the duke. "I was astonished to find Monsieur de Montmorency here, when I believed him prisoner at Antwerp."

Henry bit his lip at this answer.

"True, monsieur," said he, "but I paid his ransom, and for two hundred thousand crowns I have had the pleasure of recovering an old servant and faithful friend."

"And what about the towns that your majesty is to restore to Spain, England, and Piedmont?"

"I restore those towns, monsieur, not to ransom the constable, but to purchase peace."

"I had believed that in France, at least, we obtained peace by victories."

"Then, being a Lorraine prince, monsieur, you know little of the history of France. Have you forgotten the treaties of Bretigny and Madrid?"

"No, sire; but there is no resemblance in the positions. After the battle of Poitiers, King John was prisoner in London. After the battle of Pavia, Francis the First was prisoner at Toledo. Now, King Henry the Second, at the head of a magnificent army, reigns in the Louvre. Why should we, when prosperous, wilfully renew the disasters of those fatal epochs of our history?"

"Monsieur de Guise," said the king, haughtily, "are you aware of the rights conferred on you when you were named lieutenant-general of the kingdom?"

"Yes, sire. After the disastrous battle of Saint Laurent, after the heroic defense of Saint Quentin, when the enemy was at Noyon, when Monsieur de

Nevers had but two or three hundred gentlemen around him, when Paris trembled, and when the king watched from the town of Compiègne, then you sent for me, sire, and appointed me lieutenant-general of the kingdom. My rights were then to save France, which Monsieur de Montmorency had almost ruined. What have I done, sire? I have delivered Bourg, taken Calais, reconquered Guines, Ham, and Thonville, repaired the disasters of Gravelins, and after a year of warfare have brought together in the camp at Compiègne an army twice the strength of what it was when I took the command. Was this my right, sire?"

"Doubtless, doubtless," stammered Henry.

"Then, what meant your majesty's question?"

"I meant to say, duke, that among the rights a king gives to his subjects, that of remonstrance is not generally numbered."

"First," replied the duke, bowing with a courtesy so affected as to become impertinent, "allow me to observe to your majesty that I have not the honor of being exactly your majesty's subject. After the death of Duke Albert, the emperor, Henry the Third, gave the Duchy of Haute Lorraine to Gerard d'Alsace, first duke and founder of our house. I received this duchy from my father, and will leave it to my son. That is what you do with the kingdom of France, sire."

"Do you know," replied Henry, with irony, "that you inspire me with one fear?"

"What is it, sire?"

"That France and Lorraine should one day go to war together."

The duke bit his lips.

"Sire," replied he, "that is more than improbable, but if it should happen, and I should have to defend my patrimony against your majesty, I swear to you that it would be only on the fall of my last stronghold that I would sign a treaty as disastrous as that to which you have consented!"

"Duc de Guise!" cried the king, angrily.

"Sire, let me tell what I and other nobility think. The authority of a constable is such that they say in extreme necessity he would command half or a third of the kingdom. Well, now, without any other reason than ennui at his imprisonment, he has cost you a third of yours. Yes, of your kingdom, for I count as such all that Piedmont which cost France forty million francs, and one hundred thousand of her men to conquer. I count as your kingdom all those beautiful transalpine towns where so many of your subjects have established themselves, that little by little the inhabitants have left off their bad Italian, and now speak as good French as the inhabitants of Lyons and Tours."

"But," said Henry, rather embarrassed for a reply, "for whom do I abandon all that? For my father's daughter, my sister Marguerite?"

"No, sire, for Duke Emmanuel Philibert, her husband, your most determined antagonist and enemy. Once married, the Princess Marguerite will no longer be your sister, but the Duchess of Savoy.

Shall I tell you what will happen then, sire? Scarcely will the duke have recovered his duchy when he will tear away all that your father and yourself have planted there, and all the glory that France has acquired in Italy during the last thirty years will be effaced, and you will lose forever the hope of recovering Milan. Nor is this the worst, or what grieves me most. It is that this is all granted to the general of King Philip, our most fatal enemy. By the Alps, of which the Duke of Piedmont holds the passes, Spain is close to Lyons—Lyons which before this peace was in the center of your dominions, and which will now be a frontier town.”

“Oh! on that head you frighten yourself without reason, Monsieur de Guise, for the Duke of Savoy passes in reality from the service of Spain into mine. When Monsieur de Montmorency dies, his sword is promised to the Duke Emmanuel.”

“Doubtless, then,” replied the duke, bitterly, “that is why he took it in advance at Saint Quentin.” Then, as the king made an impatient gesture, “Pardon, sire,” continued he, “I was wrong. Such questions should be treated more seriously. Duke Emmanuel to succeed M. Montmorency! He to have the constable’s sword! On the day when he receives it, tremble, sire, lest he use it as did the Comte de Saint Paul, also a foreigner. Louis the Eleventh and the Duke of Burgundy also made peace, and one of its conditions was that the Comte de Saint Paul should be constable of France, and he was, but he always leaned to the side of Burgundy, and went on

rapidly from treason to treason, as Comines tells us."

"Then," said the king, "I must answer from Comines. What was the result of these treasons? That Saint Paul was beheaded. And, my cousin, I swear to you that at the first treason of the Duke Emmanuel the same fate shall overtake him. But it will not be so, please God. Emmanuel Philibert, instead of forgetting what he owes me, will remember what I have done for him. Besides, we shall keep in the midst of his possessions the marquisate of Salures, as a mark of honor for the French crown, so that the Duke of Savoy and his posterity may never forget that our kings had formerly conquered and possessed all Piedmont and Savoy, but that, in favor of a daughter of France married into their house, we restored to them, or rather gave gratuitously all the rest, to render them, by this immense liberality, obedient and affectionate to the crown of France."

Then, seeing that the Duc de Guise did not appear to estimate at its value the possession of Salures, which France reserved:

"Besides," continued Henry, "if you will reflect, Monsieur le Duc, you will agree with me that it was a tyrannical usurpation on the part of the late king, my father, toward the father of the present Duke of Savoy, and to which he had no right. It was not acting like a good Christian to chase a son from his father's duchy. And, had I no other

motive than to atone for this sin, I would restore to Emmanuel Philibert what belongs to him."

The duke bowed.

"Have you no answer to make, Monsieur de Guise?" said the king.

"Yes, sire—only, since the impulse of the moment carries your majesty away so far as to make you even accuse your father of tyranny, I, who think Francis the First a great king, and no tyrant, will render an account of my conduct to him, and not to his son. As you judge your father, sire, your father shall judge me. Condemned by the living, I appeal to the dead."

Then, approaching the beautiful portrait of Francis the First, painted by Titian, which is at this day one of the principal ornaments of the gallery at the Louvre, and which then hung in the room where the conversation we have just related had taken place:

"Oh, king!" said the duke, "thou who wast armed by Bazaral, and who wast called the Knight King, thou lovedst sieges and battles too well, and had too much affection for thy beautiful kingdom not to have looked down regretfully on what is now passing. My sword as lieutenant-general of the kingdom is now useless, and as I wish no one to be able to say that such a peace was consented to while the Duc de Guise had his sword by his side, I, Francis de Lorraine, who have never yet surrendered my sword, surrender it to thee, my king, the first for whom I drew it, and who knew his worth!"

With these words, detaching sword and belt, the duke hung them to the frame of the picture, bowed, and went out, leaving the king furious, the cardinal terrified, and Catherine triumphing in his nobility.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE HAWKER.

BETWEEN these opposite ambitions, each of whom, under the pretext of the dignity of the king, worked for the elevation of his own house, and tried to ruin that of his rival, rose a third group, poetical and artistic, devoted to the beautiful and the good. This group consisted of the young Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Henry the Second, of Diana d'Angoulême, of the widow of Horace Farnese, of the young pair whom we saw in the rooms of Mme. de Valentino, and at the head of all, Marguerite de France, who had just been betrothed to the Duke Emmanuel. Around these charming faces, like butterflies round a flower, had fluttered all the poets of the time, Ronsard, Du Bellay, Godelle, and Belleau.

Since the visit of the Princess Marguerite to Nice she had always preserved a tender remembrance of a young prince of fourteen, and now, after sixteen years of obstacles and impossibilities, all at once the dream of her heart had become a certainty, and the hope that had faded away was changed into cer-

tain happiness. Therefore, Mme. Marguerite was very happy.

But, alas! it was not the same with the poor Princess Elizabeth. Betrothed first to the young prince Don Carlos, with whom she had exchanged portraits, her whole scheme of happiness had been destroyed by the unexpected death of Mary of England. Philip the Second, then repulsed by Elizabeth of England, had turned to Elizabeth of France, and in the conditions for the treaty of peace a name was changed in the marriage contract, and this change brought misery on three people. The change was, that instead of Don Carlos, King Philip should marry the Princess Elizabeth.

This was a terrible blow to the poor bride, whose husband was thus changed without consulting her. At fifteen, instead of a young prince of sixteen, handsome, chivalric and in love, she was condemned to marry a king, not old in years, but prematurely aged, gloomy, suspicious and fanatic, who would keep her within the severe bounds of Spanish etiquette, and who, instead of balls, fêtes, or tournaments, gave for sole amusement the horrible spectacle of auto-de-fés.

All these personages whom we have named were united after dinner as usual, each dreaming of her joy or her grief. Mme. Marguerite was seated near the open window, with the rays of the sun gilding her bright-colored locks, Elizabeth lying at her feet, and Diana de Castro reading poetry, and Marie Stuart playing on a kind of spinnet an Italian melody, to which she had set words of her own—when, all

at once, her eyes which had been fixed upon the sky, lowered themselves to notice a scene that was taking place in a neighboring courtyard.

"What is it?" asked she, in that gentle voice which every poet of the time celebrated. A voice from below uttered some words that reached her ears, but those of no one else. Then, turning to the others, she said "I have authorized two Italian hawkers, who desire to show us their goods, to be shown up. One carries jewels and the other dresses."

"Oh!" cried Marie, clasping her hands like a child, "thank you, aunt. Such beautiful jewels and dresses come from Florence and Venice!"

"Shall I fetch Madame de Valentinois?" said Diana de Castro.

"No, my dear Diana, we will give her a little surprise," said Marguerite. "We will choose two or three presents for her, and then send her the merchants themselves. And you, dear Elizabeth, will you not smile a little?"

"Why should I smile?" said the princess, with tears in her eyes.

"If only because we love you."

"Courage, sister," said the dauphin, who, of course, was near his wife. "Perhaps King Philip is not as terrible as they say. You think of him as an old man, but he is only thirty-two."

Elizabeth only sighed more deeply than ever.

"The pretty things that we are about to see will amuse you a little," said Marie. "Only, dear sister, dry your eyes to look at them."

"If, among the dresses," said Elizabeth, trying to smile, "there be a black spotted with silver, remember I engage it for my wedding-dress."

The two men now entered the ante-chamber, each carrying a large box.

"Let them enter," said Marguerite.

"Enter, my good men," said the usher. "Remember in whose presence you are."

"Oh, be easy," replied, with a strange Savoyard accent, the younger of the two, a handsome, fair young man with a red beard and mustachios, "it is not the first time that we have been in the company of princes and princesses."

"It is easy to hear where they come from," said the dauphin. Then he whispered to Marguerite: "You may depend upon it they are ambassadors in disguise, come to see if you are really the most charming princess in the world, or whether their prince has not been deceived."

Marguerite smiled, but only said:

"Come in, my friends."

"Come in," said the the young man to his companion; "do you not hear the lady invite us?"

His comrade entered. He was a man about thirty-two, strongly built, with black eyes and beard, and who, even under his coarse dress, had an air of distinction. On perceiving him, Marguerite started and hardly repressed a cry.

"Are you Italian, my friend?" said she.

"Si, signora," replied the last comer.

"And you come—"

"From Venice. On reaching Paris, we heard that there were to be great fêtes here on the occasion of the peace and on the marriage of two illustrious princesses, and we thought, my comrade and I, that if we could but see their royal highnesses our fortunes would be made."

He spoke in Italian, and then added: "I was told that there were here two or three princesses who could speak Italian."

Marguerite smiled. "Here is," she said, "my dear niece, Marie, who speaks all languages, but especially that of Dante and Petrarch. Come here, Marie, and ask for news of that beautiful country."

"And I," said the fair man, "can find no princess who can speak Savoyard?"

"I do not," said Marguerite, "but I mean to learn."

"Ah! you are right. It is a beautiful language."

"But," said Marie, in the purest Italian, "you have promised us wonders, and, though princesses, we are women. Do not make us wait."

"I am waiting," replied he, "until the beautiful young lady in the balcony, who seems so sad, approaches also. I have always remarked that precious stones have a magic power of drying the tears in beautiful eyes."

"You hear, dear Elizabeth," said Marguerite. "Come here, and imitate Diana, who is already devouring the boxes with her eyes."

Elizabeth rose listlessly, and stood by her brother Francois.

"Now," said he, mockingly, "clear your eyes, that you may not be dazzled by what you are about to see."

As he spoke, the dark man opened his box, and, accustomed as they were to precious stones and jewelry, all the princesses uttered a cry of admiration.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE WEDDING-DRESSES.

INDEED, one might have thought that the hand of some great genius had opened before the princesses one of the mines of Golconda, so much did the box glisten with diamonds, turquoises, sapphires, emeralds and rubies, among whose whiter light lay pure white pearls of all sizes. The princesses looked at each other in astonishment, wondering if they should be rich enough to buy such wonderful things.

"Well," said Marie Stuart to the dauphin, "what do you say to that?"

"I," replied he, "can say nothing. I can only admire."

The dark Italian, as though he had divined what had passed just before his arrival, now said:

"Let us first think of the absent. They will be grateful."

So saying, he plunged his hand into the wonderful

box and drew out a kind of diadem, which made all the spectators utter a cry of wonder.

"Here," said he, "is a diadem, very simple, but which in its simplicity, thanks to the skill of the maker, appears to me worthy of the person for whom it was destined. It is, you see, a triple crescent made into a love knot. In the opening a beautiful Endymion is lying asleep, and here in her car of mother-of-pearl with diamond wheels comes the goddess Diana to visit him in his sleep. Is not one of the illustrious princesses before my eyes called Diana de Castro?"

Diana, forgetting that he who spoke was a simple foreign merchant, advanced eagerly and said, with as much politeness as though she were dealing with a prince, so much did the princely value of the thing shown enhance the value of the bearer:

"It is I, my friend."

"Well, illustrious princess," replied the Italian, bowing, "here is a diadem which was sculptured by Benvenuto Cellini, by order of Cosmos the First. I was passing through Florence. It was for sale, and I bought it, hoping to dispose of it advantageously at the court of France. Tell me, would it not look well on the white brow of the Duchess de Valentino?"

Diana uttered a cry of joy. "How pleased my mother will be!" she cried.

"Diana," said the dauphin, "tell her that Francois and Marie present it to her."

"Since monseigneur has pronounced two such

illustrious names," said the Italian, "will he be kind enough to let me place before his eyes what, in my humble desire to be agreeable, I had prepared to offer. Here, monseigneur, is a reliquary of pure gold which belonged to Pope Leo the Tenth, and which contains a piece of the true cross. It was designed by Michael Angelo, and executed by Nicolas Braschi of Ferrara. The rubies which surround it were brought from India by the celebrated Marco Polo. This splendid trinket was in my mind destined for the young, beautiful and illustrious Marie Stuart, and will continually recall to her, in that heretic land over which she is destined one day to reign, that there is but one true faith, for which it is better to die, than, by denying it, to acquire the triple crown of Scotland, Ireland and England."

Marie Stuart had already stretched out her hand for this magnificent bijou, when Francois stopped her, saying:

"Marie, take care. This must cost a king's ransom."

A smile passed over the lips of the Italian, but he said:

"I had credit when I bought it, monseigneur, and as I have full confidence in the buyer, I will give credit for it."

And it passed from the hands of the merchant to those of Marie Stuart, who went to place it on the table to admire it at her ease. Francois was about to follow her when the Italian stopped him.

"Pardon, monseigneur," said he, "but here is

something that I had intended for you. Will you do me the favor to look at this weapon?"

"Oh! the beautiful poniard!" cried Francois, tearing it from the hands of the Italian.

"Is it not a marvelous piece of work, monseigneur? It was destined for Lament de Medicis, a pacific prince who never killed any one. It was carved by the goldsmith Ghirlandajo, who has a shop at Florence. Lament died before it was finished. For sixty-seven years it remained the property of the descendants of Ghirlandajo. They had need of money at the time I was passing through Florence, so I got this for a mere trifle. Take it in all confidence, monsieur. This will not ruin a dauphin of France."

The young prince uttered a cry of joy, drew the poniard from the sheath, and then, to assure himself if the blade were really equal to the mounting, he placed a piece of gold on the table, before which Marie was on her knees, and with a blow more firmly given than could be expected from so slight a hand, he pierced the gold right through.

"Ha!" cried he, joyfully showing the piece of gold through which appeared the point of the steel, "can you do as much?"

"Monseigneur," replied the Italian, "I am but a poor foreign merchant, little used to the sports of princes and captains. I sell poniards but do not use them."

"Oh!" said the Dauphin Francois, "you have the look, my friend, of a man who, on occasion, could

use the sword and the dagger as well as any one. Try, then, to do what I have done, and if you unfortunately should break it, the loss shall be mine."

The Italian smiled and said:

"If you really wish it I will try."

Francois began to feel in his pocket for a second golden crown, but before he found it the Italian had drawn from the little leather purse which hung to his belt a Spanish coin, three times as thick as the one pierced by the dauphin, and had laid it on the table. Then, with an almost careless movement of his arm, he renewed the experiment, and after having pierced the piece of gold as if it were card-board, the blade penetrated two or three inches deep into the oak table. The blow had been given as exactly in the middle of the gold piece as though measured by a compass. The Italian then left the young prince to draw the poniard from the table as best he could, and returned to his jewels.

"And I, my friend," said Diana de Castro, "have you nothing for me?"

"Yes, madame; here is an Arab bracelet of great richness and supreme originality. It was taken at Tunis when the Emperor Charles the Fifth entered there in triumph in 1535. I bought it of an old condottori who had followed the emperor in this campaign, and put it aside for you; but if it does not please you, you can choose something else. Thank God, we are not yet at the end of our stock."

The bracelet, however, as the merchant had said, was at once too original and too rich not to con-

tent Diane. She took it, wondering only whether she could pay for it.

There remained only the Princess Elizabeth and the Princess Marguerite.

"Madame," said he, turning to the *fiancée* of King Philip the Second, "although I had also put aside something for you, would it not please you better to choose for yourself?"

Elizabeth seemed to start from a reverie.

"What did you say?" replied she.

Then Marguerite, taking from the hands of the hawker a magnificent necklace of pearls, clasped by a diamond as large as a nut, said:

"We wish, dear little one, that you should try on this necklace, and see how it looks on you."

And she clasped the necklace on Elizabeth, pushing her toward a little mirror that she might admire herself; but Elizabeth, without stopping at the mirror, returned to her seat by the window.

"Alas!" murmured Marguerite, "all the pearls in the world would not dispel that sadness." Then, turning to the Italian: "And am I, then the only one forgotten?" said she.

"Madame," replied he, "chance, or rather good fortune, made me meet on my road Prince Emmanuel Philibert. As I am from Piedmont and, consequently, his subject, I told him the object of my journey, and that I hoped to have the honor of seeing your highness. Therefore, in case I should do so, he gave me to lay at your feet this belt, which was given by his father, Charles the Third,

to his mother, Beatrice of Portugal, on the day of their marriage. It is, as you see, a serpent of gold enameled with blue, of which the mouth sustains a chatelaine, to which hang five keys of the same metal. These are the keys of Turin, Chambray, Nice, Verceil and Villeneuve al Asti, blazoned with the arms of these towns, the gems of your crown. Each of them opens in the palace of Turin a drawer, which you will open yourself on the day of your entrance there as reigning Duchess of Piedmont. After this belt, what could I offer worthy of you madame? Nothing but perhaps some of the rich stuffs that my companion will have the honor of showing you."

Then the other opened his box and displayed to the wondering eyes of the princesses a dazzling collection of those magnificent scarfs from Tunis or Smyrna, of those rich stuffs brocaded with gold and silver, which Paul Veronese throws over the aristocratic shoulders of his dukes and duchesses, and which, after falling gracefully round them, sweep the steps of the palace behind them. Then a choice of those long pieces of satin which come from the East, marvelous specimens of Indian and Chinese patience, on which the needle had traced in colors brighter than nature itself a world of fantastic birds, unknown flowers, and impossible forms.

The princesses divided these treasures eagerly, and soon the fair Italian had disposed of his goods as satisfactorily as his companion had done. There now remained nothing but to settle the accounts.

Diana de Castro determined to apply for aid to her mother, Marie Stuart, to her uncles, the Guises; the dauphin to his father. As for the Princess Elizabeth, she troubled herself no more about the payment than she had about the purchase, and Marguerite had hers ready.

But just as they were preparing to make their arrangements, the two merchants declared that they could not then tell the prices, and that they must refer to their books for that purpose, demanding, therefore, permission to return the following day at the same hour. This arrangement pleased every one, as it gave time to procure the money. Therefore, the two Italians reshouldered their packs, and with many bows took leave.

But during these preparations Marguerite had disappeared, and the Piedmontese looked vainly round for her as he left the room where this strange scene had taken place. But when he reached the antechamber he was accosted by a page who signed to him to lay down his pack and follow him. The Italian obeyed and followed the page along a corridor. At the sound of his steps a door opened, and he found himself face to face with Marguerite, and the page disappeared. He stopped in astonishment.

"Do not be astonished at my sending for you," said Marguerite with a smile. "I did not wish, for fear I should not see you again, to defer my payment until to-morrow."

And with that perfect grace which accompanied all her movements, the princess held out her hand to

the Italian. He, with the courtesy of a gentleman, bent one knee to the ground, and placed his lips upon it with a sigh that the princess attributed to emotion, but which, probably, expressed nothing but regret. Then, after a moment's silence:

"Madame," said he, now speaking in excellent French, "your highness does me a great honor; but do you know well to whom you grant it?"

"Monseigneur," said Marguerite, "seventeen years ago I went to the Castle of Nice, and Charles the Third presented to me his son, as intended for my husband. From that day forth I considered myself as his betrothed, and have waited patiently for the time when it should please Providence to unite us. God has rewarded my confidence by making me now the happiest princess in the world!"

Then she rapidly threw round the neck of Emmanuel the gold chain studded with jewels, which she wore round her own, and then let fall the tapestry which separated her from him with whom she had been exchanging the presents of betrothal.

The next and following days they vainly expected the two Italians, and then, as Marguerite took no one into her confidence, they began to conjecture that the generous distributor of jewels and dresses had been sent by the prince, but none went so far as to suppose that they were Emmanuel himself and his faithful and inseparable Scianca-Ferro,

CHAPTER XLVI.

WHAT WAS PASSING IN THE CHATEAU DES TOURNELLES AND IN THE STREETS OF PARIS DURING THE FIRST DAYS OF JUNE, 1559.

ON the 5th of June, 1559, a splendid cavalcade, composed of ten clarions, a king-at-arms and four heralds, one hundred and twenty pages and thirty or forty squires, who closed the procession, came out of the Palais Royal des Tournelles, situated near the Bastille, passed along the Rue Saint Antoine, followed by a great number of people, and stopped at the Hotel de Ville. There the trumpets sounded three times, and then, when the crowd was thick enough and every eye was fixed on them and every ear opened, the king-at-arms displayed a great parchment sealed with the royal seal, and after the heralds had cried three times, "Silence! listen to what is about to be read!" The king-at-arms began:

"In the king's name.—After so long, cruel and violent a war, which has been productive of great bloodshed and other evils, it has pleased God in His goodness to give to all Christendom, so long afflicted, the blessing of a sure and lasting peace. It is therefore reasonable that every one with demonstrations of joy and pleasure celebrate so great a good, which has converted all enmities into friend-

ships by means of the marriages agreed on by the aforesaid peace, viz: the very high, powerful and magnanimous prince, Philip, King of Spain, with the very high and excellent princess, Mademoiselle Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Henry, second of the name, King of France, and our sovereign lord.

“Also of the very high and powerful prince, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, with the very high and excellent princess, Mademoiselle Marguerite, Duchess of Berri, only sister of our aforesaid very Christian king and sovereign lord.

“Therefore, arms now turned from cruelty and violence can and ought to be employed with pleasure and usefulness by those who desire to exercise themselves in praiseworthy and virtuous acts. Consequently, let it be known to all princes, gentlemen and squires following arms, and desirous by the display of their skill to excite the young to emulation, that the lists will be opened by his very Christian majesty, and by the princes Alphonso, Duc de Ferrara, Francois de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, Peer and Grand Chamberlain of France, and Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours, and held by them against all comers duly qualified. To commence on the sixteenth day of the present month, and to continue until the accomplishment of the following conditions:

“The first joust to be on horseback in the lists, and will consist of four courses with the lance.

“The second with the sword on horseback, one to one, or two to two.

“The third, on foot with the pike and sword;

and if any one strikes the horse instead of the rider, he shall be put out of the ranks and return no more unless the king orders it.

“Four persons shall be appointed to see that all be properly done, that one of the assailants who shall have fought best shall have the prize, the value of which shall be at the discretion of the judges.

“Also, he who shall have fought best with sword and pike shall have a prize at the discretion of the judges.

“All the combatants shall touch one of the shields which will hang at the threshold, according to what they intend to undertake, and shall select any or all of them as they choose. An officer will be in attendance to enroll them according to what they touch, and each combatant shall bring to the said officer, three days before the commencement, his own shield, with his arms on it, to hang up at the threshold. Signed with our own hand. HENRY.”

Then the four heralds cried three times, “Long live King Henry, to whom God grant a glorious life!” All the troops then repeated these words, which were responded to by the general acclamations of the crowd. After which the cavalcade resumed their march, crossed the river, and went on till they reached the square of Notre Dame, and there stopping with the same ceremonies, read the same proclamation. They then proceeded to the Place de Louvre, where it was read a third time, amid similar acclamations and bravos from the multitude. They

then returned to the Palais des Tournelles, where the king was then holding his court. A week before, intelligence had been received that the Duke of Alva, who was to represent Philip the Second in the marriage ceremony was advancing toward Paris with a troop of three hundred Spanish gentlemen, and the king had immediately evacuated the Louvre, which he intended to abandon to his illustrious guests, and had sent the constable to meet the Duke of Alva. He met the cavalcade at Noyon, and returned with them to Paris, which they entered on a beautiful morning, and were lodged in the Louvre. The lists were raised on the space between the Tournelles and the Bastille. It was two hundred feet long and one hundred and fifty broad, and was formed of planks and covered with an awning of gold and azure. Galleries were erected for the spectators, and on the side nearest the castles were three doors in the form of triumphal arches, the center one the highest. Here were to stand the four challengers, whom we have already named, and on poles surmounted by streamers hung their respective banners.

At the opposite end the combatants were to enter, and here had been built a large hall where they might dress and undress. The space for the combat was about forty-five feet wide, and was closed at each end by a balustrade three feet high, with two barriers, which could be raised to allow the judges to pass in or the competitors to pass out.

The judges were to be Prince Emmanuel Philibert, the Constable de Montmorency, M. de Boissy

and M. de Vielleville, Grand Chamberlain and Marshal of France. For them a small tower was erected at each of the four corners. The Duc de Savoy and the constable were on the side of the challengers, and under them was the balcony hung with brocade for the queen, princes and princesses.

All this was still empty, but visited each day by the king, whose impatience counted the hours until it should be filled with challengers and assailants, judges and spectators.

CHAPTER XLVII.

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND.

ON June the 20th, a second cavalcade, not less splendid than that of the Duke of Alva, entered Paris by the same gate. This was headed by Emmanuel Philibert, the future husband of Marguerite. At Econen they had made a halt. The prince with his page had entered a house where they seemed to be expected. This house was a little out of the town, and stood alone. His escort waited for him, and in about two hours he reappeared, looking very sad, but his page was not with him.

"Come, gentlemen, to Paris," said he.

Then with a last look at the house, and a deep sigh, he put his horse to the gallop. At Saint Denis his old prisoner, the constable, sent to him by the

king, met Emmanuel, who received all his compliments courteously but with a grave sadness.

When they reached the barrier, a messenger was sent forward to announce to the king the approach of the prince, and when they reached the Tournelles they saw the king standing in the door-way waiting for him, holding his sister Marguerite by the hand. Behind him stood Catherine and her five children, while the steps were crowded with ladies and gentlemen. Emmanuel stopped his horse about ten feet off, dismounted and advanced toward the king, whose hand he wanted to kiss, but Henry opened his arms, saying, "Embrace me, my dear brother!" Then he presented to him Marguerite. She was dressed in crimson velvet, and her only ornament was the belt with the five gold keys. At the approach of Emmanuel the blush on her cheeks was almost as deep as her dress. She held out her hand to him, and he, kneeling down, kissed it. He was then presented to the queen, princes and princesses. Each of the latter had arrayed herself in the gifts she had received from the Italian, and which they all believed to have been presents from the Duke of Savoy. Emmanuel then presented to the king the Counts Horn and Egmont, who were destined nine years after to perish on the same scaffold, condemned by the Duke of Alva; William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, a handsome young man about twenty-six, but already gloomy with that sadness which afterward procured for him the title of "The Taciturn;" the Duke of Brunswick, and the Counts Schwartz-

bourg and Mansfeld. At that moment, just as he finished, a gentleman rode up and alighted, waiting for the king to speak to him.

"Ah! it is Lorges, our captain of the Scotch Guard," said the king, "whom we sent to your mother's aid, dear Marie, and who comes to give us news of your kingdom of Scotland. Come here, Montgomery, we are going to have great fêtes and great rejoicings."

Montgomery came forward. He brought from Scotland good political but bad religious news. Elizabeth of England was undertaking nothing against her neighbor. The frontiers were tranquil, but the interior was in flames. The incendiary was John Knox; but this terrible name was scarcely known in France when Gabriel de Lorges pronounced it. What did it matter, at that elegant court of the Valois, to that brilliant frivolous, brave, atheistical assembly, to all those kings, gentlemen, sculptors, painters and writers, what was passing in a corner of the globe which they regarded as the extremity of civilization? Yet Gabriel de Lorges came to tell Marie Stuart that her principal enemy was not the illustrious Queen of England, but a poor heretic preacher called John Knox. This John Knox was born in Lothian, in 1505, and was therefore at the time of which we write fifty-four years of age. He was about to take orders when Luther's words echoed from Worms to Edinburgh, and then John Knox began to preach with all the violence of his temperament against the pope and the mass. Named in

1552 chaplain of King Edward the Sixth of England, he had been obliged to leave on the accession of Mary, and had retired to Geneva, near Calvin. When Mary died, he judged the time favorable, and returned to Scotland, where he brought thousands of copies of the pamphlets which he had had printed at Geneva, called "Against the Government of Women," and which was at once an attack against the regency of Marie de Lorraine and the future reign of Marie Stuart. Such was the man Marie had to fear. But had she really anything to fear? What did she care about Scotland, she, the wife of a dauphin of France? What cared she for that wild rose called the crown of Scotland, when she had the prospect of that of France before her?

Nothing cast a cloud over any of these gay faces when the bell of Notre Dame announced that all was ready for the first of the marriages about to be celebrated, that of King Philip, represented by the Duke of Alva, with Elizabeth.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE JOUSTS.

It was on the 27th of June that this marriage was to take place. When they reached the church door, poor Elizabeth nearly fainted, and they were obliged almost to carry her in. Emmanuel looked at her with sympathy, and thought of her whom he had left at Eiconen.

After the ceremony they returned to the Chateau des Tournelles, where a grand dinner awaited them, and in the evening Emmanuel opened the ball with the young Queen of Spain. Friends and enemies were united there for the time, and all the great hatreds appeared lulled to sleep, excepting that they separated into groups. The constable, with his sons, Coligny, Dandelot, and their partisans in one, and the Duc de Guise with his brother and friends in another. The first set looked gay and triumphant, the last grave and menacing. Every one said that if at the tourney a Montmorency met a Guise the mock fight would become a real one.

But Henry the Second had taken precautions. He had forbidden Coligny or Dandelot to touch any shields but his own or those of Jacques de Nemours and Alphonse d'Este. The same orders had been given to Dandelot and Francois de Montmorency. The Duc de Guise had wished at first to have absented himself from the fêtes, and had spoken of the necessity of a journey to his principality, but Catherine de Medicis and the Cardinal de Lorraine had talked him out of this resolution, imprudent like all those inspired by vexation and pride. He had therefore remained, and the event proved that he had done well.

At midnight they separated.

The Duke of Alva led Elizabeth to her room, placed his right leg in the bed, covered it with the sheet, then drew it out again, bowed, and left the apartment.

The next day all the court were awakened by

the trumpets, except the king, who had scarcely slept, so eager was he about his tourney. From day-break he had been wandering from the lists to the stables, reviewing his magnificent stud, to which Emmanuel had just added as a present nineteen horses saddled and caparisoned.

The challengers and judges breakfasted alone at a round table, in imitation of that of King Arthur, and were waited on by the queen, the Princess Marguerite, Marie Stuart, and the Duchess de Valentinois. After it was over every one went into his own room to arm.

The king had a magnificent Milan cuirass damascened with gold and silver. His helmet, surmounted by the royal crown, represented a salamander with spread wings. His shield bore a crescent on a blue sky, with this device, "*donec totum impleat orbem.*" His colors were white and black.

Monsieur de Guise had the same cuirass that he used at the siege of Metz, and of which it bore evident marks. It may still be seen at the Museum of Artillery at Paris. His buckler also represented a sky, but with a white cloud veiling a golden star, and the device was "*Present, but hidden.*" His colors were white and scarlet, and "*the colors,*" says Brantome, "*of a lady I could name;*" but unfortunately he does not name her, so we are forced, through ignorance, to be as discreet as he was.

Monsieur de Nemours had a Milanais cuirass, a present from the king. His shield bore on it a Cupid, with this device, "*Angel or Cupid, he comes from*

the sky." His colors were black and yellow, which meant, according to Brantome, "Enjoyment and constancy."

Lastly, the Duke of Ferrara, a young prince little known at that time, was armed with an admirable Venice cuirass. His shield represented Hercules overthrowing the Nemean lion, with this device, "To be strong is God-like." His colors were yellow and red.

At noon the doors were opened. All the places in the galleries were quickly filled with the ladies or gentlemen for whom they were destined. Then the royal balcony was occupied in its turn. On the first day, Mlle. de Valentinois was to present the prize, consisting of a magnificent chain, resplendent with rubies, sapphires and emeralds, separated by golden crescents triply interlaced. The second day the conqueror was to be crowned by Mlle. Marguerite. The prize was a Turkish ax of exquisite workmanship, which had been given by Solyman to Francis the First. The third day was reserved for the queen, and the prize was a sword, the hilt of which was carved by Benvenuto Cellini.

The musicians, placed in a balcony opposite the royal one, began to play. The hour had arrived. The pages first entered the lists. There were twelve for each challenger, each clothed with silk velvet of his master's colors. Then came four squires to each challenger, whose business it was to pick up the broken lances and aid the combatants in case of need. Then came the four masters of the lists, mounted

and armed from head to foot, and each, lance in hand, placed himself before one of the barriers, where he stood like an equestrian statue. Then the trumpeters appeared and sounded their defiance. One trumpet replied, and a knight, fully armed, with lowered visor and lance in rest, and managing his horse with that grace for which he was noted, rode up and touched the shield of Henry the Second. By the *toison d'or* hanging round his neck all recognized Count Egmont, he having received that order in 1546 from the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Then he forced his horse to go back the whole length of the list. At the challenge the king came out fully armed. Even had he not been king, the applause would still have been universal, for it was impossible to have a seat at once more firm and more elegant than that of Henry the Second on horseback. Like the Count Egmont, he held his lance in his hand. After having made his horse wheel, while he bowed to the queen and princesses, he turned to his adversary, and then the squires raised the barriers, and the masters of the lists cried "Go on!" The two cavaliers waited only for the signal to rush on each other, and each struck full on the breast. Both were too good riders to be dismounted, but the count lost one stirrup and let his lance fall, while the king's flew into pieces, leaving only a fragment in his hand. The horses, frightened by the shock, stood trembling. Two squires rushed forward, one to pick up the count's lance, the other to give the king a new one. They retook their places,

the trumpets sounded again, and this time both lances broke. Henry bent like a tree before the wind, and Egmont lost both stirrups, and was obliged to hold on by the pommel. But the king recovered himself, the count let go the pommel, and both, after this terrible shock, were once more firm in their saddles. New and stronger lances were brought them. Horses and riders seemed both equally impatient. The trumpets sounded, the spectators cried out and clapped their hands, and amid the bravos the signal was scarcely heard. The third shock was the most formidable of all. Henry lost one of his stirrups, and Egmont's lance was shattered to pieces, while his horse reared, and the girth, being broken by the shock, the saddle slipped over the back of the animal, and the count found himself unhorsed. But, as he fell standing, this fall, which it was impossible to avoid, only served to show his skill and address. However, bowing to Henry, he declared himself vanquished, and courteously threw himself on the mercy of his conqueror.

"Count," said the king, "you are prisoner to the Duchess de Valentinois. Go and throw yourself on her mercy. It is she, not I, who will decide your fate."

"Sire," replied the count, "could I have known that so sweet a slavery awaited me, I would have let myself be taken the first time I fought against your majesty."

"That would have spared me many men, count, at Gravelines and Saint Laurent."

The count retired, and five minutes after was kneeling at the feet of Mlle. de Valentinois, while she tied his hands with a magnificent pearl necklace.

Meanwhile, the king retired to rest, and left the course to the Duc de Guise. His antagonist was the Count Horn, and, although without much advantage on his side, he admitted himself conquered at the third course.

Then came Jacques de Nemours and a Spaniard called Francisco Rigonnes. At the first blow he lost his stirrup, and at the third was thrown from his horse.

The Duke of Ferrara was the last. He rode against Dandelot, and the combat was declared equal.

The first day ended by a joust of the four challengers against four assailants; but, except the king, who, either through merit or courtesy, obtained some advantage over his adversary, all were about equal.

Henry was at the height of joy, and did not hear what was whispered of his antagonists being too good courtiers to conquer a king.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE CHALLENGE.

THE next day King Henry was in such a hurry to recommence that he advanced the dinner by an hour, that they might be ready at noon precisely.

Just as the trumpets announced the entrance of

the squires and pages, a cavalier wearing a large flapped hat which hid the top of his face, and enveloped, in spite of the heat, in a large cloak, left the stables of the Tournelles mounted on a fleet horse, and set off at a rapid trot, which soon changed into a gallop that enabled him in one hour to reach Econen. He did not stop until he reached the house where we saw Emmanuel and his page stop. Mules loaded with luggage, and a horse ready saddled at the door, announced a departure.

Emmanuel, for it was he, threw a rapid glance on these arrangements, tied up his horse, mounted the first flight of stairs, and rushed into the room where a young lady sat in a simple dark-colored traveling-dress. As the prince entered the room she raised her eyes, uttered a cry, and rushed forward. He received her in his arms.

"Leona!" said he, in a reproachful tone, "is this what you promised me?"

"But she, trembling all over, could only stammer out the name, 'Emmanuel!'"

The prince, still holding her in his arms, carried her to a couch. He looked at her for some time with indescribable tenderness.

"It is lucky," continued he, "that a few words in your letter yesterday revealed your design to me. Besides, I dreamed that I saw you in a nun's dress, or else you would have gone, and I should not have seen you till my return to Piedmont."

"Or, rather," murmured she, in a faint voice, "you would never have seen me again."

Emmanuel shuddered.

"No, no, I was wrong. Pardon me," said she.

"Remember what you promised me, Leona," said he, "at Brussels, while your brother, the man whose life we saved, and who unknowingly has brought misfortune on us both, was waiting at the door for a favorable answer, which you in your heavenly devotion begged me to give him. You then swore to me only to leave me on the eve of my marriage, and afterward to meet me every 17th of November in the little house at Oleggio, where, as a child, you were carried by me. Often you have said to me, 'It is you who saved my life, Emmanuel. It belongs to you, do what you like with it.' If that life really belongs to me, do not separate it from mine sooner than necessary. And to keep your vow, without which I should have refused all offers, and am ready to do so still, push to the last limits your devotion, that supreme virtue of the woman who loves, and which makes her more than an angel, since angels have no passions to sacrifice."

"Oh, Emmanuel! Emmanuel!" murmured Leona, who seemed to return to life and happiness under her lover's voice and look, "it is not devotion that I fail in."

"What is it, then?"

"Alas!" cried she, "I am filled with jealousy. Oh, I love thee! I love thee, my Emmanuel!"

And the lips of the lovers met in a long kiss.

"Jealous!" said he, "and of what?"

"Oh! I am so no more," cried she. "A love like yours is eternal!"

"You are right, Leona," said he, tenderly. "God has made an exception in my favor, and in sending me the heavy burden of a crown has added one of his angels to help me to sustain it. We will still live for each other, united by an indissoluble tie which can brave time and even absence. I know well that it is a wintry life without flowers, or sunshine, or fruit, but still it is life. The earth feels that it is not dead, and we shall feel that we love."

"Emmanuel, you in your turn must console and sustain me."

"And now," said the prince, "tell me, my beloved Leona, what made you jealous?"

"Oh! since you left me, Emmanuel, four leagues only have separated us, and I have only seen you twice."

"But, my Leona, you know that all is festivity at the Chateau des Tournelles. Sad fêtes for two hearts, the poor Princess Elizabeth's and mine, yet we have to play our parts, and the king is constantly asking for me."

"But," said Leona, "how could you come away when in the midst of the tourney, when you are one of the judges?"

Emmanuel smiled.

"I ought to be there, certainly, but with lowered visor. Suppose a man of my own height puts on my armor, mounts my horse, and fills my place as judge?"

"Ah! good Scianca-Ferro!" cried Leona.

"Then I, in my uneasiness, tormented by your letter and my own dream, came to see my Leona, that she may renew to me the vow which she was on the point of forgetting. We mingle souls and hearts, and quit each other strong like the giant, who had only to touch the earth to renew his vigor."

Let us leave them exhausting the cup of their last hours of joy, and see what was passing meanwhile at the Tournelles. Just after Emmanuel had ridden off, a squire knocked at the door of the palace and asked for Emmanuel. Scianca-Ferro was personating him, and he was told that an unknown squire demanded earnestly to speak to him. Emmanuel had no secrets from Scianca, so he closed his helmet, and, going to the darkest corner of the room, ordered them to let the stranger enter.

The squire appeared in the door-way. He was dressed in dark colors, and bore neither device nor arms by which he might be recognized.

"Have I the honor of speaking to the Prince Emmanuel Philibert?" asked he.

"So you see," replied Scianca.

"Here is a letter from my master. I wait for a consent or a refusal."

Scianca-Ferro took the letter, and read as follows:

"A man who has sworn the death of Emmanuel Philibert proposes to him in the tourney of to-day a deadly combat, either with the lance, sword, ax, club, or poniard, renouncing beforehand all mercy if

he be conquered, as the prince must expect none if he be vanquished. They say that Prince Emmanuel is brave. If he be not unworthy of the name he will accept the proposed combat, and will promise to obtain the necessary permission from the king.

“A MORTAL ENEMY.”

Scianca-Ferro read the letter without any signs of emotion, and then turning to the squire:

“Tell your master,” said he, “that all shall be as he desires, and that, after the king has run his courses, he has but to present himself in the lists and touch the shield of Prince Emmanuel. This shield hangs on the right, opposite to that of Monsieur de Vielleville. I pass my word in advance for the king’s consent.”

“My master sent a written challenge. He desires a written permission.”

At that moment M. de Vielleville appeared to see if Emmanuel were ready.

“Monsieur de Vielleville,” said the supposed prince, “be kind enough to ask his majesty for me to write ‘Granted’ at the bottom of this letter. I beg the king to consent, as a refusal would touch my honor.”

Scianca-Ferro was completely clothed in the duke’s armor. His lowered visor prevented his face from being seen, so Monsieur de Vielleville bowed, and went to execute his commission. Five minutes after he brought back the letter with the word “Granted” and the royal signature at the bottom. Scianca-

Ferro, without a word, presented it to the squire, who took it and went out. Scianca then went to his own room, took his sword and his club, and ordered three lances to be got ready for him. He then took, in front of the barrier, the place which the duke had occupied the day before. The trumpets sounded the signal and the tourney commenced. The king ran first and broke his three lances, one against Count Horn, another against the Duke of Brunswick, and the third against the Comte de Mansfeld. Then followed the three other challenges. All these were marvels of skill and strength. Still, it was evident that the assembly was preoccupied by the expectation of some great event. This was the combat authorized by the king. Henry had been unable to keep the secret entirely, but without telling the name of the combatant he had announced the combat. Every one knew that probably the day would not pass without blood reddening this arena prepared for a fête. The women trembled at the idea of a combat, but still waited for it with impatience.

After the Duke of Ferrara the general combat should have taken place. The trumpets gave the signal, but instead of four trumpets only one answered. A shudder ran through the spectators, but two alone knew its real meaning—the king and Scianca-Ferro. The king bent over to see if the duke were at his post, and Scianca-Ferro bent lightly over his horse's neck in answer.

“ Good courage, brother ! ” said the king.

Scianca-Ferro smiled under his mask, and raised

his head proudly. At that moment a man fully armed rode into the lists.

CHAPTER L.

THE COMBAT.

THIS new-comer carried a lance in his hand, his sword hung to one pommel of the saddle, and his ax to the other. Behind him came his squire with two other lances. He was dressed entirely in black. The feathers of his helmet were black. So was his horse and its trappings, and the only bright points about him were the point of his lance and the blade of his ax. There was no device on his shield which could give any clue to what nation or class he belonged. Only a gold chain round his neck and gold spurs on his heels indicated that he was a knight.

At the sight of so gloomy a figure, who seemed sent by Death himself, all the spectators felt a shudder run through them. He advanced slowly to the middle of the lists, bowed to the queen and the ladies, then riding straight up to where the Duke Emmanuel's shield hung, he touched it with the point of his lance, and said:

"Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, before the King of France, the princes and noble gentlemen here present, before the queen, princesses and noble ladies who listen to and observe us, I challenge you to a combat for life or death, without mercy given, tak-

ing God for witness of the justice of my cause, and all here present for judges of the manner in which I shall comport myself. God and victory be for the right!"

A feeble cry replied to this defiance. It proceeded from the pale lips of Marguerite, who seemed ready to faint. Then followed a profound silence, broken in a moment by these words from him whom all believed to be Emmanuel:

"It is well. I accept the combat as it is proposed, with God for my judge, with the king, lords and ladies for witnesses, and I on my part also renounce all mercy. And now let God decide on which side the right lies!"

Then in a calm voice he turned to his squire and asked for a lance. The squire advanced, bearing three lances well sharpened and brilliant. He chose one, and, jumping over the barrier, entered the lists.

Then the king came down and took the place that he had abandoned, intending himself to act as judge during this combat.

Meanwhile, the two adversaries measured each other with their eyes through their closed visors, and put their lances in rest. The signal was given by the king himself, and immediately they rushed on each other. Each had chosen a different aim for this blow. The black knight directed his lance against the visor of his adversary, while Scianca aimed at the breast. The black knight carried off the ducal crown of Emmanuel's helmet, while Scianca's lance broke into pieces against the steel cuirass of his adversary. The

blow had been so violent that the stranger bent double and lost a stirrup. However, he quickly recovered it, and regained his seat. Each rode back to his starting point, and Scianca took a fresh lance. No cry or applause followed this rencontre. The terror of all was too great. Once more the king gave the signal, and a second shock almost like thunder was heard. The two horses staggered. The two lances were broken. The duke's helmet bore marks of the steel, and Scianca's lance remained in the cuirass of the black knight. For a moment all thought that his breast was pierced as well as his cuirass, but they were mistaken. The lance had been stopped by the mail of the gorget. He seized the lance with both hands, and tried to draw it out, but being unable, was obliged to have recourse to his squire. Nothing decisive was yet done, but the advantage, if any, was on the side of the duke. The ladies began to feel a little reassured. The terrible spectacle fascinated them in spite of themselves, and Mlle. Marguerite alone turned away her eyes, and would not look.

The king was delighted. He scarcely thought of the chances of misfortune, or the blow that might fall upon his sister, but cried out constantly:

“Courage, brother-in-law! Victory to the shield with the silver cross!”

Each adversary now took up his third lance, and prepared for the third course, and the king once more gave the signal. This time the black horse fell, and Scianca lost his stirrups, and was obliged to catch hold of the pommel, only, with admirable skill he

drew his sword as he did so, making the movement seem as if for that purpose. On his side, the black knight no sooner touched the ground than he jumped up again, and also with the same dexterity drew his sword and loosed his ax. Each then drew back a step, fastened his ax to his belt within reach of his hand, as a reserve, and then, leaving his squire to pick up the lances and lead away his horse, rushed furiously on each other.

If the silence had been great and the attention profound during the first part of the fight, it was deepened now when the hand-to-hand fight began. Every one knew that Emmanuel excelled in this. None, therefore, was surprised at the strength and violence of the blows which began to rain upon the black knight, but all were surprised at the skill and promptitude with which they were parried and returned. The two swords seemed like tongues of flame. No eye, however practised, could follow them. One could only see that they had touched helmet, shield, or cuirass by the sparks that flew from them.

At last Scianca gave such a blow on the head of his adversary that it must have been cloven had he not interposed his shield. The shield was cut in two, and an incision made in the armlet. The stranger stepped back, threw away his broken shield, and taking his sword in both hands, struck so furious a blow in his turn on the duke's shield that the blade of the sword flew in twenty pieces, and the handle alone remained in his hand. Scianca uttered an exclamation of joy, as the stranger threw away his

shield and broken sword and seized his ax, and then Scianca's faithful ax, which had won him his name, was seen whirling through the air.

Henceforth the question became one of strength. Struck like the anvil by the hammer, the stranger for some time remained as motionless, but at last he began to give ground.

Then Scianca also taking a step back, gave so terrible a blow right on the visor of the stranger that he threw up his arms and tottered as if about to fall. Scianca-Ferro rushed on him like a tiger, dagger in hand. A cry arose from all the women:

"Mercy! Duke of Savoy, Duke Emmanuel, mercy!"

But Scianca, shaking his head, replied:

"No mercy for the traitor—the assassin!" And Scianca was seeking through the visor a place to insert his dagger, when suddenly a cry was heard:

"Stop, in God's name!"

A man rode in, jumped off his horse, and rushing up to the conqueror, threw him far from him.

Then, to the first cry of terror succeeded one of surprise, for it was Duke Emmanuel himself who entered.

"Scianca-Ferro!" cried he, "what have you done? Do you not know that I do not wish that man killed?"

"I tell you, Emmanuel, that he shall die by my hand!"

"Luckily," said Emmanuel, "it will not be this time."

Indeed, although the stranger's face was covered with blood, he had only fainted, and had no serious wound.

"Gentlemen," said Emmanuel to the other judges, "I put this man under the safeguard of your honor. When he recovers, let him be free to retire without saying a word or being forced to declare the cause of his hatred. I beg this of his majesty."

The squires took the wounded man in their arms and carried him away. Meanwhile, Scianca unbuckled his helmet, whence the crest had disappeared, and threw it from him in a rage. It was not till then that the king appeared convinced.

"Then, brother-in-law, it was not you?" said he.

"No, sire, but it was, as you see, a man who did honor to the armor he wore."

And he held out his arms to Scianca, who embraced him, growling all the while. The applause, which up to that time had been kept in by terror or astonishment, now burst forth with a force that shook the building, and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs; but nothing could console Scianca for seeing De Waldeck escape a second time living from his hands. He was led up by the king and Emmanuel to receive an ax as a prize from the hands of Marguerite, but as he was going, he muttered:

"If the serpent fall a third time into my hands, I warrant he will not escape alive!"

CHAPTER LI.

THE PREDICTION.

WHAT had passed remained a mystery, not only to the mass of spectators, but even to those more nearly connected with the duke. How did it happen that the duke, who should have been present, was absent, and that, in his absence, his foster-brother had put on his armor and sustained so terrible a contest for him?

The king appeared desirous to be initiated, but Emmanuel begged him not to attempt to raise the veil which covered this mysterious corner of his life. And Marguerite, whose love gave her a right to be curious, was so happy to see him safe and sound, and had been so agitated by the combat, that she did not press her inquiries.

Three times Emmanuel sent to ask for news of the wounded knight, and heard that he was recovering, and, at last, that he had mounted his horse and was riding away. The only answer to his inquiries was:

“Tell the duke that we shall meet again.”

And then he rode off, unknown to all, and ignorant that it was not with the duke that he had fought.

Henry said to the ladies:

“What can I offer you to-morrow that will be worthy of your beautiful eyes, after the spectacle of to-day?”

Poor king! He did not know that the spectacle of the morrow would be so terrible that it would make the other to be forgotten.

The next morning, when the king was about to arm, M. de Boissy was not at his post.

"Never mind, Vielleville," said the king. "As you are here it does not matter much. You shall arm me."

M. de Vielleville obeyed, but when he reached the helmet, instead of placing it on the king's head, he stopped and uttered a sigh.

"Sire," said he, "God is my witness that I never accomplished a duty more reluctantly than what I am now performing."

"And why so, old friend?" asked Henry.

"Because for three nights, sire, I have dreamed that this day would be fatal to you."

"Oh! I know where you get that from. You have been seeing the queen, and she also has been persecuting me about her visions."

"Sire, I have not had the honor of speaking to her majesty for three days, and never on this subject."

"Oh! then I know why you are afraid. It is because your brevet as marshal is not signed yet. Reassure yourself. Unless I am killed on the spot you shall have your brevet. If I can not sign my whole name, I will sign with my initial."

"If your majesty takes it thus," said Vielleville, "I have but to beg pardon for what I dared say. However, your majesty might feel sure that, in case

of any misfortune happening to you, it would not be my brevet I should regret."

And he put on the helmet. At that moment Coligny entered. He was armed, excepting his helmet, which a page carried behind him.

"Pardon me, sire," said he, "but they say that the jousts to-day are to be terminated by a *mêlée*. I wish to know if it be true, because, if so, I should wish to say a few words to your majesty."

"No; there will be no *mêlée*," replied Henry. "But, tell me, dear admiral, what you had to say, had there been."

"Sire, pardon me a question that is not dictated by simple curiosity. Against whom does your majesty intend to run?"

"Oh, my dear admiral, that is no secret. Against Monsieur de Guise, Monsieur de Nemours, and the Duke of Ferrara."

"And against no one else?"

"No—I think not."

Coligny bowed.

"That is all I wished to know, sire. I am now happy and satisfied."

"It does not take much to make you so, then, my dear admiral," said the king, laughing. "Come, Vielleville, we are late."

The king ran first against M. de Guise. Both employed all their skill, but at the third course the duke lost his stirrups, so the honor remained with the king, although many said that it was all the fault of a restive horse.

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Then came M. de Nemours, who sustained his reputation. But the king did not lose his, for at the third course M. de Nemours' horse fell, and the king was declared victor. The Duke of Ferrara, though skillful, was not an adversary to disquiet the king. Queen Catherine began to feel reassured. She had read in the stars that if the king passed safely over this 30th of June he would have a long and prosperous reign. The Duke de Ferrara was conquered like the rest. But it was not yet over. It was but four o'clock, and the king was not satisfied.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" cried he, as the judges pronounced all to be over, "I shall be crowned conqueror too easily."

And seeing M. de Montgomery standing near fully armed:

"Ah, Montgomery!" cried he, "Monsieur de Guise told me that you nearly made him lose his stirrups the other day. While I go to drink a glass of wine, prepare yourself, and we will break a lance in honor of our ladies."

"Sire," replied Montgomery, "I should accept with much pleasure the honor conferred upon me, but we have no lances here."

"Oh, I have some, and will send you three to choose from."

Then, dismounting from his horse, the king took off his helmet, and asked for some wine. As he was about to drink, the Duke of Savoy came up to him.

"Another cup!" cried the king. "The duke must drink with me to the health of the fair Marguerite."

"Sire," said Emmanuel, "I ask no better, but let me first deliver my message."

"Speak, brother."

"I come, sire, in the name of Queen Catherine, to pray you to run no more. All is finished happily, and she begs your majesty to run no more."

"Bah!" replied Henry. "I have challenged Monsieur de Montgomery, and have sent him three lances to choose from. Tell the queen I will run this one more, and then stop."

"Sire!"

"A glass for Monsieur de Savoy, and I will give him up the marquise of Salures. But do not tease me any more about this course."

"Yes, but we will, sire," said a second voice behind Henry.

The king turned and recognized the constable.

"Ah! is it you, my old bear? What have you to do here, unless you are thirsty? Your place is in the lists."

"Your majesty is wrong. My place was there as long as the lists were open, but now that they are closed—"

"Closed? No. I have another lance to break."

"Sire, the queen—"

"Ah! you also come from her?"

"Sire, she begs you—"

"A glass for the constable," interrupted the king. The constable took it, grumbling.

"Sire," said he, "after the peace I have just negotiated, I thought myself an ambassador of some

moment, but your majesty proves to me that I had too good an opinion of myself."

"Here, Emmanuel, let us each drink to our ladies, and you, constable, tell the queen that I drink to her health, and will break this last lance in her honor."

There was no more to be said. The two envoys bowed and retired.

"Here, Vielleville," cried Henry, "my helmet."

But, instead of Vielleville, it was Coligny who entered.

"Sire," said he, "here I am again."

"Then do me the favor to buckle my helmet."

"Sire, one word first."

"No, if you please, my dear admiral."

"It will be too late afterward, sire."

"Well, then, speak, but quickly."

"Sire, do not run against Monsieur de Montgomery."

"What! You also! You, as half a heretic, should not be superstitious. It is all very well for the queen, who is a Catholic and a Florentine."

"Sire, what I have to say to you is the more to be listened to as it proceeded from a great emperor now dead."

"Ah! from Charles the Fifth, and you forgot to tell me."

"I gave the counsel indirectly, sire, by advising you to send Monsieur de Montgomery to Scotland."

"Ah! true, that advice came from you."

"Yes; but you do not know why I gave it."

"No,"

"It was because the emperor heard from his astrologer that Monsieur de Montgomery bears between his eyebrows a sign announcing that he will one day prove fatal to a prince of the fleur de lis."

"Bah!"

"The august emperor told me to warn your majesty, but as I held Monsieur de Montgomery to be one of your most devoted subjects, I feared to injure him with your majesty, and therefore contented myself with advising you to send him to the assistance of the Regent of Scotland. But, now, when after all was believed over, your majesty, by a kind of fatality, challenges him, I tell your majesty and beg you not to run against Monsieur de Montgomery."

Henry remained silent a moment, then laying his hand on Coligny's shoulder:

"Admiral," replied he, "if you had told me this morning what you have now said, probably I should never have challenged Monsieur de Montgomery; but now to draw back would look like fear, and God is my witness that I fear nothing in the world. I thank you none the less, admiral, but I must run this last course."

"Sire," said a squire, entering, "Monsieur de Montgomery is armed and waiting your pleasure."

"Well, then, friend, buckle my helmet, and let the trumpets be sounded."

The helmet was buckled, but the musicians, seeing no one appear, and believing the joust over, had quit-
ted their places. This was announced to the king,
who replied:

"Then let us run without them."

Then he mounted his horse, and rode out crying:

"Ha! Monsieur de Montgomery, are you ready?"

"Yes, sire," replied the count, advancing also.

"Gentlemen," said the king to the judges, "we wait your signal."

And amid a mournful silence the two rushed forward and met in the middle of the lists. All at once, to the great astonishment of the beholders, the king lost his stirrups and fell forward on his horse's neck, while Montgomery, as though petrified with terror, threw down the piece of broken lance which he held in his hand. M. de Vielleville and M. de Boissy jumped down and ran toward the king, crying:

"For the love of God! what is the matter, sire?"

"That you were right, dear Vielleville, in opposing this accursed joust!"

"Are you wounded, sire?"

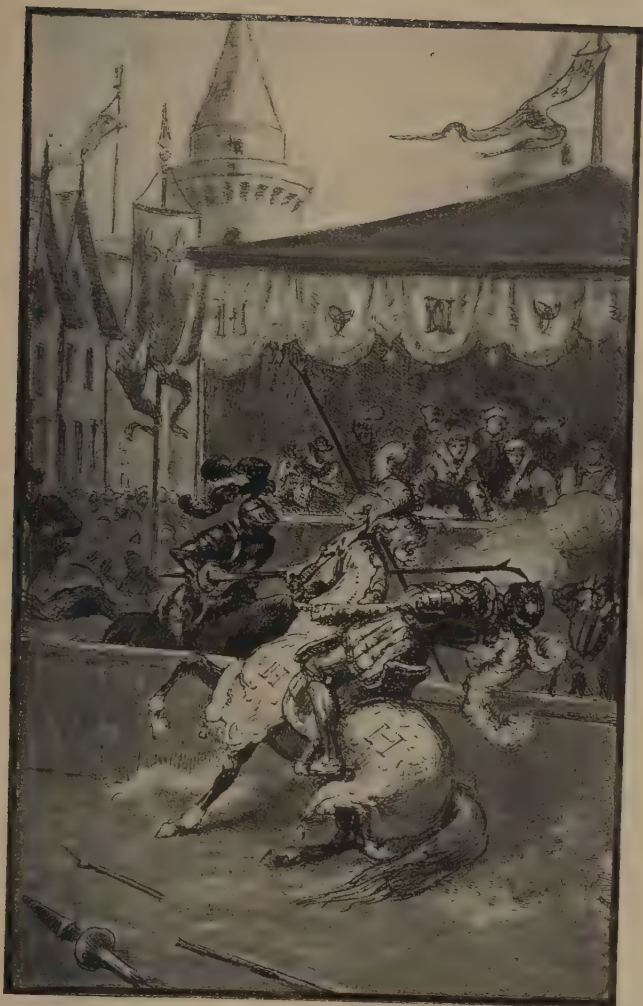
"Mortally, I believe," murmured he, faintly.

Montgomery's lance, gliding along the steel, had raised the king's visor, and a splinter had entered his eye and reached the brain.

Assembling all his strength in one last effort, the king said:

"Do not let Monsieur de Montgomery be molested. It was not his fault."

A cry of terror burst from all the spectators, and all fled in tumult, crying out, "The king is dead!"



Montgomery's lance had raised the king's vizor, and a splinter had entered his eye and reached the brain. Page 378.

The Page of the Duke of Savoy

CHAPTER LII.

THE DEATH-BED.

THE king was carried to his room and laid upon the bed. They could not take off the helmet, for the piece of wood was still in the wound, from which it protruded two or three inches. Five surgeons were there, but none dared to draw it out, and though Queen Catherine, the dauphin, and the princesses all begged them to make an effort for the relief of the king, they only shook their heads and said:

“Send for Monsieur Ambroise Paré.”

Servants, pages, and squires went off in every direction in search of this surgeon, who had at that time gained a great celebrity.

He was found at last, and appeared in the doorway. He was about forty-five, grave-looking and thoughtful. Every one drew back to give him a passage to the bed, and every eye was fixed on him, as on the only person capable, if any one was so, of saving the king's life. At sight of the wound M. Paré turned pale.

“Monsieur Ambroise,” said Catherine, “do not forget that it is the King of France we place in your hands.”

Ambroise had already extended his arm toward the bed, but he let it fall again.

“Madame,” said he, “in the state in which the king now is, the real King of France is not your

august husband, but his successor. I, therefore, must have permission to treat him as I would the meanest soldier in the army. It is the only chance."

"There is, then a hope?"

"I do not say so, madame."

"Do your best then," replied Catherine. "You are known for the most skillful man in the kingdom."

Ambroise did not reply, but resting his left hand on the helmet, drew out the piece of wood with the right. Henry gave a shudder and a sigh.

"Now," said Ambroise, "take off the king's helmet as gently as possible."

Monsieur de Vielleville attempted to do so, but his hand trembled so that the surgeon stopped him.

"Let me do it," said he.

And leaning the king's head on his left arm, he took the helmet off very gently. The rest of the armor presented less difficulty. While it was being removed the king made not the slightest movement, but appeared for the time perfectly paralyzed.

Ambroise Paré now proceeded to examine the wound. A previous examination of the piece of wood had shown him that it had entered about three inches, and the "detritus" clinging round it had reached the brain. He then delicately raised the lips of the wound and found it as he expected—horrible. He then placed over the eye a cold-water bandage, to be removed every quarter of an hour. At the first touch of the cold water there was a slight contraction of the king's features, a proof that life was not extinct, and this gave a gleam of hope to the surgeon, who said:

"Madame, I can not yet pronounce any opinion as to the ultimate result. All I can say is, that there is no immediate danger of death. Consequently, I advise your majesty to retire and take some repose. As for me, from this moment I will not quit the bedside until the king is dead or cured."

Catherine approached her husband and bent down to kiss his hand, but as she did so, she drew from his finger the famous ring, which was then imagined to be a charm which secured his love to Diana. The king started, as he had done when the wood was drawn from the wound. Ambroise Paré advanced quickly.

"Pardon, madame," said he, "but what have you done to the king?"

"Nothing, monsieur," said Catherine, hiding the ring. "Perhaps the king recognized me."

She then went out, followed by the dauphin and the other princes and princesses. Outside she met M. de Vielleville, who had gone to change his clothes, which were all covered with the king's blood.

"Where are you going, monsieur?" asked the queen.

"I am grand chamberlain, madame, and my duty is to stay by the king."

"Your duty accords with my wish, monsieur. I have always thought you my good friend."

M. de Vielleville bowed.

"Madame," said he, "I humbly thank your majesty, and will do my best to merit that opinion."

"You have but one thing to do for that purpose,

and that is, to prevent Mademoiselle de Valentinois from coming to the king."

"But, madame," said Vielleville, rather embarrassed at this order, which would establish his favor if the king died, but put it in great peril if he recovered, "if Mademoiselle de Valentinois insists?"

"Tell her, my dear count, that while the king is insensible the queen governs, and that it is not her will that the courtesan, Diana de Poitiers, enters the room of her dying husband."

"Diable!" said Vielleville, "they say there is a certain ring—"

"Which is here," interrupted the queen. "I drew it from the finger of my beloved husband, and if his majesty should die, which God forbid, I can sign your brevet as marshal with it."

"Madame," said Vielleville, somewhat reassured, "you are the queen, and shall be obeyed."

"Ah! I knew you were my friend," replied she.

The king remained four days motionless. During that time Mlle. de Valentinois often presented herself, but was always refused admittance. Some of her friends advised her to leave the Tournelles and retire to await the event at the Castle of Anet. But she always replied that her place was near the king, and that as long as he still breathed her bitterest enemies dared attempt nothing against her.

On the third evening a man got off a horse covered with foam, and stopped at the Tournelles, saying that he was sent by King Philip to see Henry, if he still lived.

"What name shall I take to the queen?" asked the usher, who had the strictest orders to admit no one.

"It is not to the queen you must carry it, but to Monsieur Paré, my brother's doctor. I am called Andre Vesale."

The usher entered the room where the king still lay without giving a sign of life, and approaching M. Paré, who, with a skull in his hand, was examining the interior with care, told him the name he had been requested to announce. Ambroise Paré uttered a cry of joy.

"Ah, good news!" cried he. "If the king can be saved by human science, this is the man to do it." And opening the door, he cried, "Enter, enter. You are welcome!" Then to M. de Vielleville he said: "Monsieur le Comte, will you be kind enough to tell the queen that the illustrious Andre Vesale is here?"

M. de Vielleville, happy to carry good news, went, and passed as he did so a man about forty-six, dark and intelligent-looking. Andre Vesale enjoyed at that period an immense reputation, and was, therefore, received with great pleasure by a man as modest and conscientious as Paré, who was much superior to Vesale in the dexterity necessary to extract a ball or cut off a limb, but inferior in theory, and especially in anatomy. Indeed, he had made anatomy his special study, and at that period, when popular opinion was so opposed to dissections, he had exposed himself to the hatred of fanatics for the sake of science, and had made some few steps in advance of the gen-

eral ignorance. He had studied at Montpellier, where the doctors had obtained from Louis of Anjou the permission to have every year the corpse of a criminal to dissect. At eighteen he came to Paris, and had there braved the dangers attending the stealing of dead bodies. After three years passed in this gloomy work he had obtained a professorship at Louvaine, and there had permission to give anatomical lectures, which he illustrated by a perfect skeleton which he had in his possession. But he was called before the magistrates to account for the possession of this skeleton. "I brought it from Paris," said he. This was an untruth, but he regarded it as allowable in the interests of humanity. One day, when he was riding with a friend by the place of execution, which was about a mile and a half from the town, Vesale saw a body almost reduced to a skeleton. He therefore returned in the night, carried it away, cleaned and put it together again.

Then came the war in Italy between Charles the Fifth and Francis the First, and Vesale followed the Spanish army, as Paré did the French. Here he gave himself up ardently, though secretly, to his favorite study, and at last published and presented to the Prince Philip a manual of anatomy. But from that moment all the professors attacked the book as sacrilege, and sent it to the theologians at Salamanca to decide if it were permitted to Catholics to dissect human bodies. Luckily, the monks replied "that it was useful, therefore permitted."

This attempt failing, they tried calumny, and

spread a report that Vesale, too much in a hurry to wait for the death of a Spanish gentleman, had opened him while still living. It is true that they could not name the gentleman, but the fact was publicly believed, and it required all the protection of King Philip to shield him from the popular fury. Alas! Philip at last grew tired of sustaining this martyr to science, and Vesale, forced to quit Italy, France and Spain, undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but being thrown by contrary winds on the Island of Zante, died there of hunger and misery. At the time, however, of which we are writing, the arms which upheld him were not yet tired, and the King of Spain, convinced of the genius of his doctor, sent him to the aid of Henry the Second.

CHAPTER LIII.

FLORENTINE POLITICS.

ANDRE VESALE approached the wounded man, looked at him, inquired what had been his treatment, approved of it in all points, and then desired to see the piece of wood drawn from the king's eye, and inquired how it had penetrated—whether horizontally, diagonally, or obliquely.

Paré replied obliquely, and then, taking the skull, put into the eye the piece of wood, as well as he could recollect, in the exact position in which it had entered the king's.

"I was busy," said he, "examining the interior of the head to ascertain, if possible, the amount of injury the king has sustained."

"It is needless," said Vesale. "I know exactly what must have happened."

And he then described to his colleague his idea on the subject.

"It is wonderful!" said Paré. "That is exactly what I have traced on the skull. Well, what do you think of the wound?"

"It is mortal," said Vesale.

A feeble cry was heard behind them. Catherine de Medicis had entered, unperceived by them, and had heard the opinion just expressed.

"Mortal, do you say, monsieur?" said she.

"I think it my duty, madame, to repeat to you what I have just said to Monsieur Paré. The death of a king is no ordinary event, and those who are to inherit the empire should be warned of it. However painful it may be, I repeat, then, madame, that the king's wound is mortal."

"But," said Catharine, "will he die without having recovered his senses?"

Vesale approached the bed, took the king's hand, and felt his pulse.

"No," said he.

"Then the fever has diminished," said Paré. "It has been up to one hundred and ten."

"Madame," said Vesale, "if this improvement continues, it is probable that the king will speak before he dies."

"And when?" asked Catherine.

"Ah! madame, you ask more than science can tell. However, my opinion is, that it will probably be to-morrow."

"Vielleville, you hear?" said the queen. "At the first sign of life let me know. I must be present to hear what the king says."

The next day, about two in the afternoon, the pulse sunk to sixty-two. The wounded man made a slight movement, and uttered a feeble sigh.

"Monsieur de Vielleville," said Vesale, "call her majesty the queen. The king, I believe, is about to revive and speak."

M. de Vielleville went, and, as he returned, Henry muttered, in a half-intelligible manner, the words:

"The queen! Let them go and fetch the queen."

"Here I am, sire," cried Catherine, falling on her knees beside the bed.

Ambroise Paré looked with wonder at the man, who, if he could not command life and death, seemed at least initiated into all their secrets.

"Does your majesty wish us to retire?" said Vesale.

"No; let them stop," murmured Henry. "Besides, I am so weak that, from one moment to the other, I fear to faint."

Then Vesale drew from his pocket a little vial containing a red liquor, and putting some drops in a cup, introduced it between the king's lips. Henry uttered a sigh of satisfaction, and a faint look of life returned to his face.

"Ah!" said he, "I feel better."

Then looking around him:

"You here, Vielleville? You have not left me?"

"Not for a minute, sire," replied Vielleville, with a sob.

"You told me, but I would not believe," murmured Henry. "I was wrong. Nor you either, madame. Monsieur de Coligny, also, is my true friend. He told me more than any of you, for he named Montgomery as the man who would kill me."

"He named Montgomery!" cried Catherine. "How did he know—?"

"By a prophecy made to the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Apropos, I hope that Monsieur de Montgomery is free."

Catherine did not reply.

"I hope he is," continued Henry. "I ask and even exact that no harm shall be done to him."

"Yes, sire," replied Vielleville, "De Montgomery is free. He sends every hour to ask for news of your majesty. He is in despair."

"Let him console himself. Poor De Lorges! He has always served me faithfully."

"I wish he had stayed in Scotland," murmured Catherine.

"It was an order from me that brought him back. I challenged him to fight. My ill-luck did all, and not he. And now, let me profit by this moment of life which God grants me to regulate the most pressing business."

"Oh, monseigneur!" murmured Catherine.

"First, let us think of the promises made to our friends, and then of the treaties with our enemies. You know what was promised to Vielleville?"

"Yes, sire."

"His brevet as marshal of France. It must be all ready."

"Yes, sire," replied Vielleville, "your majesty had the kindness to order me to have it ready on that fatal day of the 30th of June, and as since that time I have never left you, I have it still about me."

And drawing it out he presented it to the king.

"I can not move without great pain, madame," said Henry. "Have the goodness to sign this brevet for me, to date it from to-day, and to name the cause why I do not do it myself."

The Comte de Vielleville burst into tears, and throwing himself down by the king's bed, kissed his hand.

Meanwhile, Catherine wrote at the bottom of the brevet:

"For the wounded king, by his orders, and by his bedside.

"CATHERINE, 4th July, 1559."

"Is that right, sire?" said she, showing it to Henry.

"Yes, madame; and now give it to Vielleville."

Catherine gave it, but whispered as she did so:

"You have the brevet; but none the less, keep your promise, my good friend, for it may be withdrawn."

"Be easy, madame, you have my promise," replied he.

"Now," said Henry, "are Monsieur de Savoy and my sister married?"

"No, sire," replied Catherine; "it would have been a strange time for a wedding,"

"On the contrary, I wish them to be married as soon as possible. Vielleville, go and fetch Monsieur de Savoy and my sister."

Catherine accompanied De Vielleville to the door.

"Count," said she, "do not fetch them until I open this door. Wait in that ante-chamber, and, for your life, not a word of the king's return to consciousness—above all, to Mademoiselle de Valentinis."

"Do not fear, madame."

And Vielleville began to walk up and down the room.

"Where are you going, madame?" said Henry. "I do not wish to lose time."

"Here I am, monsieur. I was telling Monsieur de Vielleville where he could find the duke if he were not at home. But he will be, doubtless. It is only at night he leaves the castle, and returns at day-break."

"Ah!" said the king, with a sigh, "there was a time when I also wandered about on fine nights on a good horse, *per amica silentiæ lunæ*, as my Marie says. It was sweet to feel the fresh breeze and to

see the foliage tremble in the pale light of the moon. Ah! this fever did not burn me up then. My God, have pity on me, for I suffer much!"

Meanwhile, Catherine had signed to the two physicians to retire, and they went and stood in a window out of ear-shot.

"Well," said the king, looking toward the door, "are they coming?"

"Yes, sire; but before they do come will your majesty permit me to say a few words?"

"Yes, madame, although I am very tired, and seem to see things only through a cloud."

"Never mind. God will clear away those clouds, and permit you perhaps to judge more wisely than when you were in perfect health."

Henry turned his eyes on Catherine, burning with fever, making a great effort to raise his mind to the point of hers, of which he had had more than once occasion to appreciate the depth and cunning.

"Speak," said he.

"Pardon me, sire; it is not my opinion, nor that of your doctors, but it is, I believe, your own that your wound is mortal."

"It is so, and I consider it a miracle that I am now permitted to hold this last conversation."

"Sire, you remember what Monsieur de Guise said to you when you were about to sign this unlucky treaty of Cateau-Cambresis?"

"Yes."

"Monsieur de Guise is a good friend to France."

"A Lorraine!"

"But I, sire, am no Lorraine."

"No, but you are—"

"A Florentine, and, as such, a true ally of France. Well, I tell you, sire, that the Florentine and the Lorraine have been truer friends to France than some Frenchmen."

"I do not say no."

"We said to you, 'Such a treaty might have been, perhaps, accepted the day after the battle of Saint Laurent, but now that we have retaken Calais, and have fifty thousand armed men in the field and thirty thousand in garrison, such a treaty is an absurdity.' This is what we said, but you would not listen."

"It is true. I was wrong."

"You confess it?" said Catherine, with beaming eyes.

"Yes, I confess it, but it is too late."

"It is never too late, sire."

"I do not understand."

"Will you let me act? Will you trust to me? I will restore to France all its towns, Piedmont, Nice, La Bresse, and open the road to the Milanais."

"And what must I do for that?"

"You must, in spite of the majority of the dauphin, yet in consideration of his feeble health and little knowledge of business, name a regency to last one year, or more, if needful, to consist of Monsieur de Guise, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and myself, who will alone regulate all civil, political, and religious matters."

"And what would Francois say?"

"He would be too happy. He thinks only of his wife, and desires nothing more."

"True, it is a great happiness to be young and to love your wife"—and he sighed—"but there is one thing against it: that he is King of France, and must think of his country before his love."

Catherine felt inclined to say, "Oh, king! who gives such good counsel, why did you not follow it?" But she restrained herself and said:

"And then we will do all."

"How?"

"Break off the treaty, and retake all the towns."

"Yes; and I, meanwhile, should present myself before God loaded with perjury, having taken my death for a pretext not to keep my promise. It is too great a sin, madame. If I were to live it might be different."

Then, raising his voice:

"Monsieur de Vielleville," cried he.

"What are you doing?" cried Catherine.

"I am calling Monsieur de Vielleville, who is certainly not gone to Monsieur de Savoy."

Vielleville, hearing himself called, now entered.

"Monsieur de Vielleville," said Henry, "you did well to wait for a second order, since the queen told you to wait, but this second order I now give. Go at once, and let them be with us here in five minutes."

Then, looking round, and seeing that the doctors had drawn near on hearing his voice;

"Just now some one gave me a liquid which did me good. I want to live another hour. Give me a few more drops."

Vesale took the spoon, poured into it five or six drops of the red liquid, which he gave to the king, while Ambroise Paré raised his head by putting his hands under the pillow.

Meanwhile, Monsieur de Vielleville had gone to fetch the Duke of Savoy and Marguerite, while Catherine stood by the bed, smiling, but with rage in her heart.

CHAPTER LIV.

"A KING OF FRANCE MUST KEEP HIS WORD."

FIVE minutes after, Emmanuel entered by one door and Marguerite by another. They both looked very joyful at the king's return to consciousness; and, indeed, thanks to the cordial he had just taken, there seemed, for the time, to be a remarkable improvement in him. Catherine stepped back to yield them her place by the bed, and both knelt down.

"That is well," said Henry; "remain as you are."

"Oh, sire!" said Emmanuel, "we are rejoiced to see this change."

"My good brother, what happiness!" said Marguerite.

"Yes," said Henry, "it is a happiness, and I thank God for it that I have recovered my senses.

But there is no hope. Think not, therefore, of what can not be, but act like those whose time is short. Emmanuel, take my sister's hand."

Emmanuel obeyed, and Marguerite's hand met him half-way.

"Prince," continued Henry, "I desired your marriage with Marguerite when I was well. Now that I am dying I do so still more earnestly."

"Sire!"

"My dear brother!" said Marguerite, kissing his hand.

"Listen," said Henry, solemnly, "listen, Emmanuel. Not only are you now a great prince—thanks to the provinces I have restored to you—a noble gentleman through your ancestors, but you are an honorable man, thanks to your right feeling and generous heart. Emmanuel, it is to the man of honor I address myself."

Emmanuel raised his noble head, the goodness of his soul shining in his eyes, and in his own sweet yet firm voice said:

"Speak, sire."

"Emmanuel," continued the king, "a peace has just been signed disadvantageous to France; but never mind, it is signed. This peace makes you at once the ally of France and Spain. You are cousin to King Philip, but you will be uncle to the King Francois. Your sword is now of great weight in the scale in which God weighs the destinies of nations. Well, I adjure this sword to be as just as its master is true, as terrible as its master is courageous. If

the peace sworn between me and Philip is broken by France, let it turn against France, but if by Spain, against Spain. Were the office of constable vacant, I would give it to you as to the prince who has married my sister, to the defender of the frontiers of my kingdom. It is held, however, by a man from whom I ought perhaps to take it, but who has always tried to serve me faithfully. Never mind, you need hold yourself engaged by nothing but justice and right. On whichever side that lies, draw your sword. Will you swear to do this?"

Emmanuel extended his hand.

"I swear it!" said he.

"I thank you. And now, on what day will all the formalities necessary to your marriage be complete?"

"On the 9th of July, sire."

"Swear to me, then, that whether I am alive or dead, in my bed or in my tomb, the wedding shall be celebrated on that day."

Marguerite cast a rapid and rather anxious glance at Emmanuel. But he, drawing her toward him, kissed her forehead, and said:

"Sire, receive this second oath as you did the first. I swear both with equal solemnity, and may God punish me if I fail in either."

Marguerite turned very pale.

At that moment the door half opened, and the head of the dauphin showed itself.

"Who is there?" said the king.

"Oh! my father speaks!" cried the dauphin, rushing in. Henry's face lighted up.

"Yes, my son," said he, "and you are welcome here, for I have something to say to you."

Then to the duke:

"Emmanuel, embrace your nephew."

The duke took the lad in his arms and kissed him.

"You will remember your oaths, brother?"

"Yes, sire, faithfully."

"Now, then, leave me alone with Francois."

Emmanuel and Marguerite retired, but Catherine kept her place.

"Well, madame?" said the king.

"I also, sire?" said she.

"Yes, madame."

"When your majesty desires to see me again, you will send for me."

"When this interview is over you can return, whether I call you or not. Probably I shall not, for I feel very weak. But come."

When she was gone, Henry said to the dauphin, "Is your mother gone, Francois?"

"Yes, sire."

"Lock the door, and then come here, for I feel my strength failing me."

Francois hastily turned the key, and running back said, "Oh, mon Dieu! father, you are very pale. What can I do for you?"

"First call the doctor."

"Gentlemen, come here at once!" cried the dauphin.

"Strength," said Henry—"give me strength!"

"Sire!" said Vesale, hesitating.

"Have you no more of that elixir?"

"Yes, sire, I have some."

"Well, then?"

"But, sire, it gives you only a fictitious strength."

"What does that matter?"

"Its abuse might shorten your majesty's life."

"Monsieur, the question now can only be of a few days. Let me be able to tell the dauphin what I wish to say, and I care not if I die at the last word."

"Sire, give me an order, then, for I gave you the last dose with hesitation."

"Give it to me again—I order you!"

And his head fell back on the pillow, his eyes closed, and so mortal a paleness spread itself over his face that all thought he was going to die.

"My father is dying!" cried the dauphin.

"The king has still three or four days to live. Do not fear," replied Vesale; and without waiting for a spoon, he poured a few drops from the bottle into the king's mouth. The effect was slower this time, but not less certain. After a few seconds the blood appeared to circulate afresh through the veins of the patient, the teeth unclosed and the eyes opened.

"Thank God!" murmured Henry, looking for the dauphin.

"Here I am, father," said the young prince, kneeling down by the bedside.

"Paré," said Henry, "raise me with the pillows, and put my arm round the dauphin's neck, that I may lean on him as I descend these last steps to the tomb."

Vesale then slipped the cushions from a sofa behind those of the king, so as to raise him, while Ambroise placed round the dauphin's neck the half-paralyzed arm of the king. Then they retired, and the lips of the father and son met.

"My father!" murmured the lad, while large tears rolled down his cheeks.

"My son!" said the king, "you are now sixteen. I shall speak to you as to a man."

"Sire!"

"Yet, more, you are a king, for I now count for nothing in this world. I have committed, my son, through weakness, never through hatred or wickedness, many faults in my life."

Francois was about to speak.

"Let me finish, Francois. I must confess to you, my successor, that you may avoid the faults into which I have fallen."

"It was not you who committed these faults, father."

"No, my child, but I am answerable for them before God and man. One of the last and greatest has been committed at the instigation of Mademoiselle de Valentinois and the constable. I had a bandage over my eyes—I was mad. I ask your pardon, my son."

"Oh, father!"

"This was the peace signed with Spain—the abandonment of Piedmont, Savoy, the Milanais, and one hundred and ninety places, in exchange for which we receive only Saint Quentin, Ham, and Le

Catelet. Just now your mother was here, reproaching me with this, and offering me reparation."

"But how, sire, since your word is pledged?"

"Good, Francois! Yes, the fault is great, but my word is given. Francois, whatever they tell you, whatever seduction they employ, whether of women or priests—should they even call up, by the aid of magic, my ghost to make you believe it to be my wish, do not change this treaty—all the more because it is disastrous; and remember ever the maxim of King John, 'A king of France must keep his word.'"

"My father, I swear to do as you desire!"

"If your mother insists?"

"I shall tell her that I am your son as well as hers."

"And if she orders?"

"I will reply that I am king, and that it is for me to give orders."

And he drew himself up with that majesty peculiar to the Valois.

"Good, my son! This is what I had to say. And now, adieu, for I feel that I grow weak. Repeat on my body the oath you have just made. Adieu, Francois! adieu, my son! Embrace me for the last time. You are King of France!"

And Henry fell back pale and motionless on his pillow. Francois then repeated once more his oath to hold intact the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, and then opened the door to his mother, who was waiting impatiently for the end of this interview.

On the 9th, by the bed of the king, who still

breathed, although giving no other signs of life, Emmanuel was married to Marguerite by the Cardinal de Lorraine. The ceremony was afterward finished a little after midnight in the Church of Saint Paul. On the next day, just ten days after he received the fatal blow, Henry expired without effort or convulsions. He was forty years old, and had reigned twelve years and three months. On the same day Mlle. de Valentinois, who had remained at the Tournelles till the last moment, retired to her chateau at Anet. All the court returned to the Louvre, the two doctors remained to embalm the body, and four priests to pray over it.

At the door of the Louvre Catherine de Medicis and Marie Stuart met. Catherine, according to habit, was about to go in first. Then she stopped, drew back, and said with a sigh:

“Pass, madame. You are the queen.”

CHAPTER LV.

IN WHICH THE TREATY IS EXECUTED.

ON the 3d of August, 1559, the letters patent which restored to Emmanuel all his estates were sent off.

“The affair,” says Brantome, “was much discussed, and many thought that Francis the Second was not obliged to fulfill the engagements sworn to

by his father, above all, to an inferior power." And they said that the Duchess of Savoy had already brought too great advantages to her husband, and that the establishment of ten daughters of France should not have cost more than the crown.

Three successive orders had to be sent to Marshal Bourdillon before he would evacuate the places he held. He exacted that the order should be registered.

As for Emmanuel, however anxious he might be to return to his own estates, he was detained by various things. Firstly, he had to go to Brussels to take leave of King Philip, and to resign to him the government of the Netherlands. Philip named his sister Margaret, Duchess of Parma, governor in Emmanuel's stead, and then set off for Spain with his young wife. Emmanuel then returned to Paris to be present at the coronation of the young king, who immediately after retired to the chateau of Villes Coterets, to amuse himself at his ease. Here Emmanuel, who accompanied him, fell ill of a fever, and Marguerite, who adored her handsome husband, nursed him with the utmost devotion. Luckily the fever was only the result of fatigue and regrets. Emmanuel had regained a duchy, but he had lost his Leona, who had returned to the village of Oleggio to await that 17th of November on which she was to see him again.

At last the powerful fairy called Youth vanquished fever and grief, and on the 24th of September Emmanuel was able to accompany Francois and Marie (whose united ages amounted to thirty-two) to

Rheims. He then took leave of them, and set off for his own duchy. Marguerite accompanied him to Lyons, but there they separated, Emmanuel being unwilling to bring his bride to his states until they were brought into some order. Besides, November was drawing near.

Scianca-Ferro returned with Marguerite to Paris, while the duke went on to Marseilles, where a troop of Savoy gentlemen awaited him.

Francis the Second sent him there the collar of the order of Saint Michael, which he afterward wore with the *toison d'or*.

From Marseilles he went to Nice, and with no little pride re-entered as a triumphal prince the castle whence he had once fled when he was a feeble child. Here he received an exact account of the state of his provinces.

The country was ruined. Neither Piedmont nor Savoy had any fortified towns, the French having destroyed all but the citadels of the five towns which they were to keep till the Duchess of Savoy had a son. All the princely houses were dilapidated, and their furniture destroyed, and most of the princes' jewels had long before been turned into money.

To face this penury the duke had only six hundred thousand crowns, proceeding from Marguerite's dowry and the ransom of Montmorency and Coligny.

Absence and misfortune also, which dissolve so many loves and devotions, had produced their usual effect. The nobility, who had not seen Emmanuel since his childhood, had forgotten him, and become

accustomed to live as a kind of free confederation. Great numbers of them had attached themselves either to France or Spain. The people had become accustomed to the presence of the French, who had treated them with great moderation. They had no police, and each man lived as he liked.

The few days, however, that Emmanuel passed at Nice were days of joy. It seemed like father and children meeting after a long absence.

Another cause of discord were the religionists of Piedmont, who professed to hold the doctrines of the primitive church. Persecutions and butcheries had been carried on against them for four centuries without effect, and when Luther and Calvin appeared, these Vaudois had joined themselves to them, and become a party in the state. During the misfortunes of Charles the Third they had spread much and gained many partisans, but both Francis the First and Henry the Second had carried on vigorous measures of persecution against them.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE SEVENTEENTH OF NOVEMBER.

ON the 17th of November, Emmanuel, wrapped in a great cloak, got off his horse at the door of a little house in Oleggio, and received in his arms the half-fainting form of Leona.

Five months had passed since they had met, and in that time a great change had taken place in Leona. This change was such as takes place in a flower which, accustomed to air and sunshine, is suddenly transported to darkness and shade; in a bird, the free denizen of the air, when shut up in a cage—the flower would lose its colors, and the bird its song. Leona's cheeks had grown pale, her look sad, and her voice grave.

After the first few minutes given to the happiness of meeting again, Emmanuel looked at her anxiously, for sorrow had left its unmistakable mark upon her. She smiled at his look.

"I know what you are looking for," said she—"for the page of the Duke of Savoy, the joyous companion of Nice, for poor Leone. He is dead. You will find him no more, but there remains his sister Leona to whom he has bequeathed the love and devotion he felt for you."

"Oh! what matters?" said he. "It is Leona I love, and ever shall."

"Love her well," said the young girl, with the same melancholy.

"What do you mean?"

"My father died at an early age. My mother also died young. In a year I shall have attained her age."

Emmanuel pressed her with a shudder to his heart. "What do you say, Leona?" cried he.

"Nothing very frightful, since I am now sure that God permits the dead to watch over the living."

"I do not understand you, Leona," said Emmanuel, uneasily.

"How much time have you to give me, my beloved?"

"Oh! do you not remember we agreed to pass twenty-four hours together?"

"Yes. Well, then, to-morrow I will tell you. From now till then let us live in the past. I have no future." Leona had been but a short time at Oleggio, and was yet unknown to every one, and Emmanuel, who had not been in Piedmont since his childhood, was still less known. The peasants, therefore, saw this handsome pair pass by without knowing who they were. Where were they going? Leona was leading Emmanuel. From time to time they stopped and approached a group of peasants.

"Of what are you talking, friends?" she asked.

"What should we be talking of, pretty lady, but of the return of our prince to his states?"

"Well, and what do you think of him, my friends?" said Emmanuel.

"We think nothing of him, for we do not know him."

"You know him by renown?" said Leona.

"Yes, as a brave captain. But what do we care for brave captains? To sustain their reputation they make war, and war desolates our fields, depopulates our villages, and throws our daughters and wives into mourning."

"Then you desire peace?" said Emmanuel.

"Yes, peace and justice."

"In the name of the duke I promise you that," said Leona. "For Prince Emmanuel is not only a brave captain, but a good man."

"Then," cried the peasants, "long live our young duke!"

When they were gone, Emmanuel pressed her to his heart. "Oh, my beloved Leona!" said he, "why can I not thus, with you, make the tour of my states?"

"My heart will always be with you," said she.

When they left the village, "I should have wished," said she, "to lead you where we are going by a flowery path, but you see the earth and sky together join to celebrate our anniversary. The earth is sad, like death; the sun brilliant, like life. Do you recognize the place where you found life and death together?"

"Ah! it was here?" said he.

"Yes, it was here you found us."

Emmanuel cut a branch of willow, and planted it where her mother lay. Leona gathered a few late autumn flowers, while Emmanuel leaned pensively against the tree.

"Oh!" cried he, suddenly, drawing Leona to him again, "you are the angel who has guided me from that hour to this."

"And I will continue my task in the world of spirits," said she.

Emmanuel looked again anxiously at her. As she stood there, she looked already more like a spirit than a living creature.

"Ah! you begin to understand me," said she. "Not being able to be yours, and not having strength to live here, I am going to God."

"Leona, Leona! is that what you promised me?"

"It is much more," replied she. "I promised, my much loved duke, to see you once a year, but I find that not enough. I have prayed to God to let me die, that I may quit you no more."

Emmanuel shuddered. "Die!" cried he. "But how know you what lies beyond? Have you penetrated the mystery of the grave, that you speak thus?"

"An angel has come to me, and conversed with me."

"Mon Dieu! Leona, your mind wanders," cried Emmanuel in terror.

Leona smiled. "I have seen my mother," said she.

"Your mother!"

"Yes," replied she, quietly.

"And when?"

"Last night."

"Where?"

"At midnight, near my bed."

"You saw her?"

"Yes."

"And she spoke to you?"

"She did."

The prince pressed Leona to his heart as though to make sure she was not a spirit.

"Tell me all," said he,

"Since you left me, Emmanuel, I have dreamed every night of the only people I ever loved in the world, you and my mother."

"My Leona!"

"But that was but dreaming. Last night I had a vision. I slept, and was awakened by a feeling of cold. I opened my eyes, and saw a woman dressed in white and veiled by my bed. She had just kissed me on the forehead. I was about to cry out, but she raised her veil, and I recognized my mother."

"Leona! do you know what you are saying?"

She smiled. "I extended my arms to embrace her, but she made a sign, and they fell powerless. I could not move, but I murmured 'mother.' I was not afraid, I was happy."

"And you say she spoke to you?"

"Yes. She said, 'My daughter, this is not the first time God has permitted me to see you since my death, for often in your sleep I have glided between the curtains to look at you. But this is the first time I have been permitted to speak.'

"'Speak, mother. I listen,' replied I.

"'My daughter,' said she, 'since you have sacrificed your love, God not only pardons you, but permits you to warn the duke of every great danger that shall threaten him. To-morrow, when he comes to see you, you shall tell him of your holy mission, and as he will doubt—'

"Indeed, Leona! what you tell me is so extraordinary that I cannot but doubt."

"'As he will doubt,' continued the phantom,

‘tell him that when the bird perches on the willow branch that he has just cut, and sings, Scianca-Ferro will arrive at Verceil with a letter from the Duchess Marguerite.’ Then she lowered her veil, murmuring, ‘Adieu, my daughter; we shall meet again,’ and vanished.”

Just as Leona finished speaking, a strange bird perched on the willow branch, and began to sing.

Leona smiled, and said, “Look, prince, Scianca-Ferro is now entering Verceil, and you will find him there to-morrow.”

“If that be true, it is a miracle,” said he.

“And then you will believe?”

“Yes.”

“And will do what I tell you when the time comes?”

“It would be sacrilege not to do so.”

“Poor child!” murmured the duke. “No wonder you are so pale, having received the kiss of the dead.”

The next day, on reaching Verceil, Emmanuel found Scianca-Ferro was waiting for him. He arrived the afternoon before with a letter from the duchess.

CHAPTER LVII.

“THE DEAD KNOW ALL.”

THE letter of the Princess Marguerite was accompanied by a sum of three hundred thousand crowns. The Marshal de Bourdillon, who doubtless acted on

secret orders from the Duc de Guise, refused to quit his garrison until the arrears of his men were paid. Seeing that the French did not evacuate Piedmont, Emmanuel wrote to Francis the Second about it. The answer came from Marguerite.

"As," said she, "it is incontestable that it is France and not you who should pay these soldiers, I send you the one hundred thousand crowns, the price of my maiden jewels, chiefly given to me by my father."

The French troops were therefore paid, and garrisons left only in the five reserve towns.

Emmanuel then returned to Nice, and thence to Paris, whence he rejoined Marguerite. There was, however, much to do in his states. All who had remained faithful to him were promoted to honor, and magistrates were appointed everywhere. The war was carried on for a time against the Vaudois, but by the end of another year all was quiet, and a kind of compromise effected by which the most ardent of the priests were banished and the people then left to worship as they would.

On the 12th of November, 1560, he set off for Verceil, and on the 17th was at Oleggio. Leona waited for him, as before, at the door. Fearful of the first impression of her changed looks on her lover, she had drawn her veil down. Emmanuel shuddered at the sight. She looked like the veiled figure she had described to him. He lifted her veil with a trembling hand, and the tears gushed from his eyes. Leona's skin was as white as Parian marble, her whole look

was of a person barely alive. A slight color rushed to her cheeks at seeing Emmanuel. Her heart still lived, and each beat said, "I love you!" A collation was prepared, but Leona did not touch it. She scarcely seemed to belong to earth or its wants.

After breakfast she took Emmanuel's arm, and they set out for the same walk as they had taken on the preceding year.

This time there were no groups of anxious peasants about discussing their new duke. Except the war in the valleys, which had been little felt beyond them, all had been peace. The French garrisons had quitted the towns which they had so long ruined, and justice was administered impartially to all. Now, therefore, every one was at his work, the laborers in the fields, the workmen in their shops.

After passing through the village, they reached the place where the duke had planted the willow, and where he had subsequently caused a chapel to be erected. In a golden niche was a silver figure of the Virgin and Son, and before this Emmanuel knelt and prayed. Leona stood by him, and when he had finished, she said: "My beloved duke, you promised me a year ago in this place that if, on your return to the Chateau of Verceil you found there, as I announced to you, Scianca-Ferro with a letter from the duchess, you would believe henceforth all I might say, however strange it may seem."

"Yes, I promised. I do not forget."

"Was he there?"

"He was."

"Did he arrive at the time I named?"

"Precisely."

"Did he bring a letter from the duchess?"

"It was the first thing he gave me when I saw him."

"You are, then, ready to follow my counsels?"

"When you speak, my Leona, it seems to me as though an angel spoke through your mouth."

"Listen, then. I have seen my mother again."

Emmanuel shuddered.

"When?" said he.

"Last night."

"And what—"

"You doubt still?" said Leona, smiling. "This time I will begin with the proof. Before leaving Verceil you wrote to the princess to come to you?"

"It is true!" replied he, with astonishment.

"You told her that you would meet her at Nice, whither she could come by sea from Marseilles. You added that from thence you would take her to Genoa?"

"Mon Dieu!"

"And thence by the beautiful valley of Bormida to Turin?"

"It is all true, Leona. But no one but myself knew the contents of the letter, and I confided it to a courier of whom I am sure."

"Did I not tell you that I saw my mother last night? And the dead know all."

Emmanuel, a prey to an involuntary terror, murmured:

"I must believe!"

"Well, dear Emmanuel, this is what she said further: 'To-morrow you will see the duke. Make him promise to go by night with the duchess by Tenda and Coni, while he sends an empty litter, escorted by Scianca-Ferro and one hundred armed men, by land. It concerns the safety of Savoy.' Now, dear Emmanuel, you must swear to me to follow this advice."

The duke hesitated a moment. His reason as a man and his pride as a soldier equally revolted, and strove against his promised word.

"Emmanuel," said Leona, "perhaps it is the last thing I shall ask you."

Emmanuel extended his hand toward the chapel and swore.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE ROAD FROM SAINT REMO TO ALBERGA.

EMMANUEL had given the rendezvous to his duchess at Nice, first in order to confer a new favor on his faithful city, and next, as he was to arrive in January, to show her his duchy in its most smiling aspect through the eternal spring of Nice and Oneglia. She arrived on the 15th, and she and the duke remained four months in Nice, while the duke expedited the construction of the galleys that he had ordered.

A Calabrian corsair, called Achiali, had been making descents upon Corsica, and people even pretended to have seen a suspicious-looking vessel in the river at Genoa. At last, about the beginning of March, Emmanuel decided that they should set out.

The duke was to go on horseback, and the duchess in a litter from Saint Remo to Alberga, and the departure was fixed for the 15th of March. At day-break the *cortège* left the castle at Nice with fifty armed men before the litter and fifty after, and they stopped on the first night at Saint Remo.

The next day they set off again, breakfasted at Oneglia, and then continued their journey. A little beyond Porto Mansisio the road lay between two mountains, through a narrow defile, a good place for an ambush. The duke sent on twenty men, although it seemed a needless precaution in these times of peace. The men passed safely, and then the rest of the procession passed on. But just as the duke and the litter entered the defile, a terrible fire was directed against them. The duke's horse was wounded, one of those harnessed to the litter fell dead, and a cry was heard through the curtains. At the same time wild shouts were heard, and they were assailed by a band of men in Moorish costume. They had fallen among a hoard of pirates.

One of the assailants, mounted on a magnificent Arab horse, and covered from head to foot with a Turkish coat of mail, rushed upon the duke, crying:

"Duke Emmanuel, you shall not escape me this time!"

“Nor you me!” replied the duke. Then, calling to his men, “Soldiers, do your best, I will set you an example!”

He fired at the pirate. A terrible combat commenced. Each showered blows on the other; but the armor resisted every blow. In the midst of the fight the duke felt his wounded horse giving way; he therefore called up all his strength for a blow at his adversary. The pirate threw himself backward to avoid the blow, and the horse received it between his ears. Believing his horse killed, he threw himself off just as that of the duke fell. Each ran to his saddle and seized an ax.

Never did Cyclops give ruder blows. But soon the advantage began to declare itself for the duke, although a great part of his helmet had been hacked away. The steel points of his club had made terrible inroads in the pirate’s coat of mail. Also, while the duke still appeared fresh and vigorous, his adversary’s strength seemed nearly exhausted. His breath came quick, and his blows were less rapid and vigorous. He began to fall back step by step, and as he went he approached the edge of a precipice while he seemed not to perceive it. So they went on, one retreating and the other pursuing, until within two steps of the edge, when, suddenly throwing away his ax, the pirate seized his adversary by the body, exclaiming:

“Ah! Duke Emmanuel, we shall die together!”

But a burst of laughter replied to him:

“I had recognized you, bastard of Waldeck!”

cried his adversary, unclasping the iron chain of his arms. Then raising his visor, "I am not Duke Emmanuel," said he, "and you shall not have the honor of dying by his hands!"

"Scianca-Ferro!" cried De Waldeck, "malediction on you and your duke!"

And he stooped to pick up his ax, but during this movement, rapid as it was, Scianca's club fell on his head. De Waldeck uttered a sigh and fell.

"Ah! this time, brother Emmanuel, you are not here to keep me from crushing the viper!" said he; so taking up a huge piece of rock, he smashed the head of his enemy in the helmet.

Then with another burst of laughter, he added:

"What pleases me most is that he dies in the armor of an infidel."

Then, recalling the faint cry he had heard from the litter, he ran to it and drew back the curtains.

On all sides the pirates fled.

Meanwhile, Emmanuel and the princess were quietly pursuing the way by Tenda and Coni. The duke, however, was anxious. What could have been Leona's reason for exacting this change of route? What danger did he run in following the other? And if there were danger, would it not fall on Scianca-Ferro?

The supper was sad, for Marguerite was fatigued, and Emmanuel made a pretext of feeling so also to retire early to his own room.

Eleven o'clock struck. Emmanuel opened his window. The heavens were clear and starry, the air

calm and pure. A bird sung near, whose note sounded to the duke like the one he had heard at Oleggio.

In about half an hour he closed the window and sat down. His eyes grew heavy. He heard, vaguely, midnight strike, and then saw his door open and a shadow enter and advance toward him. The shade approached, and bending over him, murmured his name, while an icy sensation on the forehead made him shudder.

"Leona!" cried he. It was indeed Leona near him, but this time without breath from her lips or light in her eyes, while some drops of blood fell from a wound she had received in her breast. He held out his arms to her, but she made a sign, and they fell powerless. "I told you, my Emmanuel," murmured the vision, in a soft voice, "that I should visit you when dead."

"Oh! why have you left me, Leona?" cried Emmanuel, despairingly.

"Because my mission was accomplished on earth, my beloved. But before I mount to the skies, God permits me to visit you, and to console you by telling you that you will have a son. The dead know all. We shall meet in heaven."

And she disappeared.

The duke, who had till then been chained to his seat, now rushed to the door, crying: "Leona, Leona, shall I see you again?"

And he fancied that a faint tone replied, "Yes."

The next day, instead of continuing his journey, the duke stopped at Coni, feeling certain that he had

tidings to hear. Indeed, about two o'clock Scianca-Ferro arrived.

"Leona is dead!" was Emmanuel's first word.

"She died last night at twelve o'clock; but how do you know?"

"From a wound in the breast," continued Emmanuel.

"A ball destined for the duchess."

"And who," cried Emmanuel, "is the wretch who attempted the life of a woman?"

"The bastard of Waldeck," replied Scianca.

"Oh, let him never fall into my hands!" said the duke.

"I had sworn to you, Emmanuel, that the first time I met the serpent I would crush him, and I have done it!"

"Nothing, then, remains but to pray for Leona," said Emmanuel.

"It is not for us to pray for the angels, but for the angels to pray for us," replied Scianca.

On the 12th of January, 1562, the Princess Marguerite gave birth, at the Castle of Rivoli, to a son who was called Charles Emmanuel, and who reigned fifty years. Three months after his birth the French evacuated Cateau-Cambresis, Turin, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve d'Asti.

CHAPTER LIX.

EPILOGUE.

ON a fine morning in the beginning of September, 1580, that is, about twenty years after the events just recorded, twenty of the guards of Henry the Third, who were called, when together, the forty-five guardsmen, were waiting in the court-yard of the Louvre for the time when the king should summon them to go to mass, for it was one of his manias to busy himself not only with the care of his own soul, but with the care of others. The life led by these young men was not amusing. The rule of the Louvre was almost as strict as that of a convent, and they were driven to numerous expedients to pass the time. It was not, therefore, astonishing that, catching sight of an old man with one eye, one leg, and one arm, who was asking charity, they should call him in and question him. He appeared about sixty. His face was covered with saber wounds, and his head with scars.

Questions fell on him as thick as hail.

“What is your name? How old are you? In what fight did you lose your eye? Where did you lose your leg? Have you lost your tongue also?”

“No, thank God, gentlemen! It remains to thank

you, if you will show kindness to an old captain of adventurers."

"You a captain? You can not make us believe that!" cried one.

"That, at least, was the title often given to me by Duc Francois de Guise, whom I aided to retake Calais; by the Admiral Coligny, whom I fought for at Saint Quentin, and by the Prince de Condé, whom I accompanied into Orleans."

"You have seen all those illustrious generals?"

"I have both seen and spoken to them. Ah, gentlemen, you are brave, I doubt not, but let me tell you that the race of the strong and valiant has almost passed away."

"You are the last, I suppose?"

"Not of those, but the last of a band of ten. Death has taken all the rest."

"And what were their names and adventures?"

"Their adventures would make a volume. As for their names, there was Dominico Terrante. He went first. One evening, passing with two companions by the Tower of Nesle, he offered a devil of a Florentine sculptor, called Benvenuto Cellini, to help him to carry a sack of money that he had just received from the treasurer of Francis the First. Benvenuto, misunderstanding his kindness, drew his sword and nailed poor Terrante to the wall."

"Ah! that comes from being too obliging."

"The second was Fracasso, a great poet. One night when composing, in the environs of Saint Quentin, he fell by chance into the midst of an ambush

laid for the Duke Emmanuel. Fracasso was so occupied with his rhyme that he found himself in the midst of the mêlée, and a blow from the club of a fellow called Scianca-Ferro, the duke's squire, laid him on the ground. The ambush failed, and poor Fracasso was hung up to an oak-tree. The third was a worthy German, called Frantz Scharfenstein. He was as tall and strong as a Hercules, and he fell fighting bravely on the breach at Saint Quentin. God rest his soul, as well as that of his uncle, Heinrich, who died an idiot through weeping for him."

"My uncle would not do that for me," cried several voices.

"The fifth," continued the beggar, "was called Lactance. He is sure of his salvation, for after having fought twenty years for our holy religion, he died a martyr."

"A martyr! Peste! tell us how?"

"It is very simple. He was then serving under the orders of the famous Baron des Adrets, who has, as you perhaps know, passed his whole life in changing from Catholic to Protestant, and from Protestant to Catholic. He was then a Catholic, and having taken some Huguenot prisoners, and not knowing what sort of death to inflict on them, Lactance had the holy idea of flaying them, and hanging the walls of the houses in the village of Mornas with their skins instead of tapestries, which was done to the honor of our holy religion. But the next year the baron turned Protestant, and Lactance, falling into his hands, he remembered his advice, and had him

treated in the same way. The seventh was a young and handsome gallant, always running after the women."

"Not so loud, my friend, for if King Henry hears you, he will have you sent away for having kept such bad company."

"And what was his name?" said another.

"He was called Victor Yvonet. One night when he was visiting a lady, her husband unhinged a massive oak door through which he had to pass, so that when poor Yvonet put the key in it fell on him and killed him. The eighth was called Martin Pilletrousse, who was hung by mistake, and the ninth was Jean Procope."

At this moment there was a cry of "The king!"

"Hide yourself!" cried the young men. "The king does not like old or sad faces."

The king entered, looking very melancholy.

"Gentlemen," said he to the young men, who were forming a hedge before the old adventurer, "I have this morning received the news of the death of Duke Emmanuel Philibert. He died worthily, as he had lived, and as he was a friend of mine I shall wear mourning for a week, and shall hear mass said for him each day. I trust you will do the same."

The king then proceeded to the church, and the guard followed him. On returning, they looked for the beggar, but he had disappeared. So had a purse and a gold chain. He had but one hand, but he knew how to use it. They inquired of the sentinel if he had seen him, and he replied:

“ Yes, gentlemen. He went out, saying, ‘ Tell the noble gentlemen with whom I have had the honor of conversing that my other companions were called Procope and Maldent. Both are dead, and I am called Cæsar-Hannibal Malemort.’ ”

And this was all that was ever known of the last of the adventurers.

THE END.

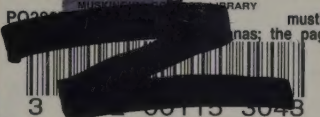
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